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THE

WORKS

OF THE

REV. P. DODDRIDGE, D.D.

VOLUME IX.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR,

CONTAINING

A PARAPHRASE ON THE REMAINING PART

OF THE

FIRST EPISTLE

OF ST. PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS,

II. CORINTHIANS,	COLOSSIANS,
GALATIANS,	I. THESSALONIANS,
EPHESIANS,	II. THESSALONIANS,
PHILIPPIANS,	I. TIMOTHY.

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THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR.

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE REMAINING PART OF

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

SECTION XII.

The apostle proceeds to answer certain questions which the Corinthians had put to him; and first, what related to the marriage-state; and in these introductory verses, he determines that in some circumstances it should be entered into, and continued in, but in others, forborne; and forbids wives to depart from their husbands. 1 Cor. VII.—1—11.

1 Cor. VII. 1. NOW concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: *It is* good for a man not to touch a woman.

1 Corinthians VII. 1.

I *NOW* proceed to give you my opinion *concerning those things about which you wrote to me.* And I begin with that concerning the lawfulness or expedience of marriage. And here I must first observe, that as to its expedience, [*it is*] in present circumstances *good for a man*, where he is entirely master of himself, *to have nothing to do with a woman*; so many are the conveniences which recommend a single life to those who are proof against some of its most obvious temptations. *Nevertheless*, as the God of nature has for certain wise reasons implanted in the sexes a mutual inclination to each other, *in order to prevent fornication*, and every other species of uncleanness, *let every man have* and retain *his own* proper *wife*; *and let every woman have* and retain *her own* proper *husband*: for neither divorce nor poligamy are

SECT. XII. 1 Cor. VII. 1.

2 Nevertheless, *to avoid* fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

2

SECT. XII.

by any means agreeable to the genius of the gospel.

1 Cor. VII. 3. *Let the husband*, where this relation is commenced, *render* all *due benevolence to the wife, and in like manner also the wife to the husband :* let them on all occasions be ready mutually to oblige, and consult the happiness of each other's life. And let them not imagine that there is any perfection in living separate from each

4 other, as if they were in a state of celibacy. For *the wife hath not* in this respect *power over her own body, but* hath by the marriage-covenant transferred it to *the husband ; and in like manner also, the husband hath not power over his own body, but* it is, as it were, the property of *the wife;* their engagements being mutual, so that on every occasion conscience obliges them to remain appropriate to each other, and consult their mutual good.

5 *Withdraw not* therefore *from* the company of *each other, unless* [*it be*] *by consent for a time ; that ye may* be at leisure to *devote yourselves* more intensly *to fasting and prayer, and* that *ye may come together again* as usual ; *lest Satan tempt you on account of your incontinence*, and take occasion from the irregular sallies of animal nature, to fill you with thoughts and passions, which marriage was in its original institution intended to remedy.

6 *But* you will observe, that *I say this by permission* from Christ ; but *not by any* express *command*[a], which he gave in person in the days of his flesh, or gives by the inspiration and suggestion of his Spirit now ; by which inspiration, you may conclude I am guided when I lay in no such precautions as these.

7 But as *for* the main question we are now upon, *I could wish that all men were*, in this respect, *even as myself ;* that all christians could as easily bear the severities of a single life in present circumstances, and exercise as resolute a command over their natural desires[b]. *But every*

3 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence : and likewise also the wife unto the husband.

4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband : and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.

5 Defraud ye not one the other, except *it be* with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer ; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

6 But I speak this by permission, *and* not of commandment.

7 For I would that all men were even as I myself ; but every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this

a *By permission.*] I cannot, with Mr. *Cradock*, think, that the meaning of this clause, is, "I permit marriage, but do not enjoin it," and have elsewhere observed, that this *verse*, and others in this context, nearly parallel to it, will be so far from affording, on any interpretation, an objection against the general inspiration of *St. Paul's epistles*, that they will rather strengthen the proof of it. See *Essay on Inspiration* in Vol. VIII.

b *That all men were even as myself.*] Common sense requires us to limit this expression as in the *paraphrase ;* for it would be a most flagrant absurdity to suppose that St. Paul wished marriage might

entirely

this manner, and another after that.

every man has his proper gift of God, one in this kind, or manner, *and another in that.* So that though I give the best advice and example I can I would not exalt myself on account of this attainment, nor despise those that have it not. SECT. xii

1 Cor. VII. 7.

8 I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I.

But as to unmarried men, who, like me, have buried their wives, *and* to the *widows, I say, it is good for them, (if they* conveniently can,) to *continue, as I do,* in the widowed state. 8

9 But if they cannot contain, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn.

But if they have not attained to *such* a degree of *temperance,* as to be easy in it, *let them* by all means *marry. For* though it be better to live calmly and soberly in a state of widowhood, than to marry, *it is undoubtedly* much *better to marry* a second time, or a third, *than to burn,* and to be tormented with those restless passions which some in such circumstances feel. 9

10 And unto the married I command, *yet* not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband:

11 But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to *her* husband: and let not the husband put away *his* wife.

But as to those that are married[c], [*it is*] *not I* [*who*] *command but the Lord* Jesus Christ himself, who enjoins, *that the wife should not withdraw herself from* [*her*] *husband: But if she be withdrawn* by her own rash and foolish act, *let her* not by any means contract another marriage; but *remain unmarried, or* rather, if it may be accomplished by any submission on her side, *let her be reconciled to* [*her*] *husband,* that they may, if possible, live in such an union and harmony as the relation requires. *And let not the husband dismiss* [*his*] *wife* on any light account, or indeed, for any thing short of adultery. For whatever particular reasons Moses might have, for permitting divorces on some slighter occasions, Christ our great Legislator, who may reasonably expect higher degrees of purity and virtue in his followers, as their assistances are so much greater, hath seen fit expressly to prohibit such separation, and we, his apostles, in our decisions upon this matter, must guide ourselves by the authority of his determination. 10 11

IMPROVE-

entirely cease. It shews therefore how unfair and improper it is, in various cases, to strain the *apostle's* words to the utmost rigour, as if he perpetually used the most critical exactness; but indeed chap. ix. 22. is so full an instance to the contrary, that it is not necessary to multiply remarks of this kind.

c *To those that are married.*] The translation, published by the *English Jesuits,* at Bourdeaux, renders it, *to those who are united in the sacrament of marriage;* which I mention as one instance, selected from a vast number, of the great dishonesty of that translation.

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THE decisions of the holy apostle are here given with such gravity, seriousness and purity, that one would hope, delicate as the subject of them is, they will be received without any of that unbecoming levity which the wantonness of some minds may be ready to excite on such an occasion.

It becomes us humbly to adore the Divine wisdom and goodness manifested in the formation of the first human pair, and in keeping
Ver. 2 up the different sexes through all succeeding ages, in so just a
4 proportion, that *every man might have his own wife, and every woman her own husband:* that the instinct of nature might, so far as it is necessary, be gratified without guilt, and an holy seed be sought, which being trained up under proper discipline and instruction, might supply the wastes that death is continually making, and be accounted to the Lord for a generation: that so virtue and religion, for the sake of which alone it is desirable that human creatures should subsist, may be transmitted through every age, and earth become a nursery for heaven.

With these views, let marriages be contracted, when it is proper they should be contracted at all. Let none imagine the state itself to be impure; and let it always be preserved undefiled. Let all occasion of irregular desire be prudently guarded against by those
5 who have entered into it. And let all *christians*, in every relation, remember that the obligations of devotion are common to all; and that Christ and his apostles seem to take it for granted, that we shall be careful to secure proper seasons for fasting, as well as for prayer, so far as may be needful, in order that the superior authority of the mind over the body may be exercised, and maintained, and that our petitions to the throne of grace may be offered with greater intenseness, copiousness and ardour.

SECT. XIII.

The apostle exhorts Christians not to break marriage on account of difference in religion; and urges, in the general, contentment with the stations in which they were called, and a concern to serve God in their proper condition, whether married, or single, bound or free. 1 Cor. VII. 12—24.

1 CORINTHIANS VII. 12.

SECT. XIII. I HAVE reminded you of the decision of Christ with respect to the affair of divorce: *now as to the rest* of the persons and cases to which I
Cor. VII. 12. shall address myself, it is to be observed, that *I speak*

1 COR. VII. 12.

BUT to the rest speak I, not the Lord, If any brother hath a wife that believeth not and

SECT. XIII.

1 Cor. VII. 12.

and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.

13 And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.

14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.

15 But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such *cases:* but God

speak, according to what duty or prudence seems on the whole to require; and it is *not* to be considered as if it were immediately spoken by *the Lord*. *If any* Christian *brother hath an unbelieving wife, and she consent to dwell with him*, notwithstanding the diversity of their religious persuasions, *let him not dismiss her*. *And* on the other hand, *if any* Christian *wife have an unbelieving husband, and he consent to dwell with her, let her not dismiss him*[a], nor separate herself from him, though the legal constitution of the country in which she lives may allow her to do it. *For* in such a case as this, *the unbelieving husband is* so *sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is* so *sanctified by the husband*[b], that their matrimonial converse is as lawful as if they were both of the same *faith: otherwise your children*, in these mixed cases, *were unclean*, and must be looked upon as unfit to be admitted to those peculiar ordinances by which the seed of God's people are distinguished; *but now they are* confessedly *holy*[c], and are as readily admitted to baptism in all our churches, as if both the parents were Christians; so that the case you see, is in effect decided by this prevailing practice. *However, if the unbelieving party*, in such circumstances as these, be absolutely determined, and *will depart, let him*, or her *depart*, and take the course they think best; and the consequence is, that *a brother, or a sister*, who hath been united to such a wife, or husband, in matrimonial bonds, is by such a conduct of a former partner, discharged from future

13 14 15

a *Let her not dismiss him.*] I have elsewhere observed, that in these countries, in the *apostle's* days the *wives* had a power of *divorce* as well as the *husbands*.

b *Is sanctified*, &c.] Some think the meaning is, "the Christian may convert the infidel;" as appears, in that the children of such marriages are brought up Christians. But this cannot possibly be the sense; for that they were brought up so, was not to be sure *always* fact, and where it was, there was no need of proving from thence the conversion of the *parent*, which would in itself be much more apparent than the education of the *child*.

c *Now are they holy.*] On the maturest and most impartial consideration of this *text*, I must judge it to refer to *infant-baptism*. Nothing can be more apparent than that the word *holy*, signifies *persons*, who might be admitted to partake of the distinguishing rites of God's people. Compare Exod. xix. 6; Deut. vii. 6; chap. xiv. 2; chap. xxvi. 19; chap. xxxiii. 3; Ezra ix. 2; with Isa. xxxv. 8; chap. lii. 1; Acts x. 28, *&c.* And as for the interpretation, which so many of our brethren, the Baptists, have contended for, that *holy* signifies *legitimate*, and *unclean illegitimate;* (not to urge that this seems an unscriptural sense of the word,) nothing can be more evident, than that the argument will by no means bear it; for it would be proving a thing by itself, *idem per idem*, to argue that the converse of the parents was lawful, because the children were not *bastards;* whereas all who thought the converse of the parents *unlawful*, must of course think that the children were *illegitimate*.

d *As*

SECT. XIII.

future obligation, and *is not in bondage in such* [*cases.*] *But* let it be always remembered, that *God hath* by his gospel *called us to peace;* and therefore it ought to be our care, to behave in as inoffensive a manner as possible, in all the relations of life; that so, if there must be a breach, the blame may not be chargeable upon the Christian.

1 Cor. VII. 15.

God hath called us to peace.

16 And as it is worth your while, to be very careful in your behaviour to those who thus make, as it were, a part of yourselves, that you may adorn the gospel you profess, by the most amiable and engaging conduct; *for* it is possible, the unbeliever may be thereby gained to Christianity. Let each therefore reflect on his own concern in this observation. For *how knowest thou, O wife, but thou mayest save* [*thine*] *husband? Or how knowest thou, O husband, but thou mayest save* [*thy*] *wife?* And surely the everlasting happiness of the person, now the companion of your life, will be more than an equivalent for all the self-denial to which you may be

16 For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save *thy* husband? Or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save *thy* wife?

17 required at present to submit. *But* if this should not be the effect, it still becomes you to do your duty; and therefore since the providence of God is concerned in all these relations, and in the steps by which they were contracted, *as God hath distributed to every one*, and as it were, cast the parts of life, *let every one so walk, even as the Lord hath called him*[d]. This is the lesson I would inculcate on you Corinthians, *and thus I command in all the churches*, and charge it upon the consciences of men, as a lesson of the highest importance.

17 But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk: and so ordain I in all churches.

18 *Is any one*, for instance, *called, being circumcised, let him not become*, so far as in him lies, *uncircumcised*[e]; nor act, as if he were desirous, as far as possible, to undo what was done by his Jewish parents, or masters, in his infancy. *Is any one called* to the fellowship of gospel-blessings *in uncircumcision let him not be* solicitous to be *circumcised*, as if that rite were necessary to his

18 Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised; is any man called in uncircumcision? Let him not become circumcised.

d *As the Lord hath called him.*] This is a very pertinent digression, as it so directly contradicts the notion which prevailed among the Jews, that embracing the true religion dissolved all the relations which had before been contracted. Whereas the *apostle* here declares, that the *gospel* left them in this respect, just as it found them; increasing, instead of lessening, the obligations they were under to a faithful and affectionate discharge of their correspondent duties.

e *Become uncircumcised.*] The word ἐπισπάσθω, has an evident relation to *attempts*, like those referred to, 1 Mac. i. 15, which it is not necessary more particularly to illustrate.

f You

his salvation, as the Jews, and some zealots amongst ourselves, have taught. For to speak the important truth in a few plain words, *Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing*; the observation, or non-observation, of the Mosaic law, will neither secure nor obstruct our salvation; *but* all depends upon *keeping the commandments of God.* An obediential faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, produced by the sanctifying influences of his Spirit on the heart, and bringing forth the genuine fruits of holiness in our temper and life, is the great concern: and whether we be Jews, or Gentiles, circumcised, or uncircumcised, we shall be happy, or miserable for ever, as we are careful or negligent with regard to this. As for other matters, be not excessively concerned about them; but *in whatever calling*, that is, profession and circumstance, *any one* of you *was called, in that let him continue;* affect not to change without the clear and evident leadings of Providence, as there is generally greater reason to expect comfort and usefulness in such a calling than another. And I may apply this, not only to the different employments, but relations in life, as well as diversity in religious professions. *Art thou*, for instance, *called* into the church of Christ, [*being*] in the low rank, not only of an hired servant, but *a slave? Do not* so much *regard it*, as, upon that account, to make thy life uneasy; *but if thou canst*, without any sinful method of obtaining it, *be made free, choose it rather;* as what is no doubt in itself eligible, yet not absolutely necessary to the happiness of a good man. *For he that is called by the Lord* to the Christian faith, [*being*] *a servant* or slave, *is the Lord's freeman.* Christ has made him free indeed, in making him partaker of the glorious liberties of the children of God; (John viii. 36;) *and* on the other hand, *he also that is called*, [*being*] *free* from the authority of any human master, *is* still *the servant*, the property *of Christ*, and owes him a most implicit and universal obedience. But upon this head, remember, that as Christians, *you were* all *bought with* a most invaluable *price*[f]: Christ hath redeemed you at the expence of

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1 Cor. VII. 19.

19 Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God

20 Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called,

21 Art thou called *being* a servant? care not for it; but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather.

22 For he that is called in the Lord, *being* a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, *being* free, is Christ's servant.

23 Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.

f *You were bought with a price, &c.*] Dr. Whitby would render it, "*Are ye bought with a price*, that is, redeemed from servitude? *Become not servants of men;* do not sell yourselves for slaves again." It is indeed probable, that the *apostle* does counsel

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of his own blood; and therefore, let me caution you out of regard to him, and from a desire to be capable of serving him, as much as possible,

1 Cor. VII. 23. that ye *do not*, where it may by any lawful means be avoided, *become the slaves of men*; since so many evils and dangers and snares are inseparable from such a situation.

24 Brethren, let every man wherein he is called, therein abide with God.

24 This, *brethren*, is the particular advice which I thought proper to give upon this head; and the general rule I laid down above, is of such great importance, that I must repeat it; *in whatever* [*condition*] *a man was called* at first, by the gospel and grace of Christ, *in that let him abide with God*[g], taking care to behave in a prudent and religious manner, as under the Divine inspection; and not changing his business in life, if it be in the general lawful, because he is a Christian; but endeavouring to pursue it with such integrity, diligence and prudence, as that his great Master and Saviour may be most effectually glorified.

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Ver. 14 LET us learn, from the exhortations and reasonings of the *apostle*, a becoming solicitude, to contribute as much as we possibly can, to the *Christian* edification of each other; and espsecially let this be the care of the nearest relatives in life. What can be more desirable, than that the *husband may be sanctified by the wife, and the wife by the husband!* May all prudent care be taken, in contracting marriages, as to the religious character of the intended partner of life; and in those already contracted, where this precaution has been neglected, or where the judgment formed seems to have been mistaken, let all considerations of prudence,

counsel Christians against becoming *slaves*, if it could be prevented and with great reason, as it was a circumstance which seemed less suitable to the dignity of the Christian profession, and must expose them to many incumbrances and interruptions in duty, especially on the *Lord's day*, and other seasons of religious assemblies; besides the danger of being present at domestic *idolatrous* sacrifices, or being ill-used, if they refused their compliance. But I cannot thoroughly approve of the Doctor's *version*, because the advice is unnecessarily restrained thereby, o those slaves who had been redeemed; which plainly, as well suited those who had their freedom given them, and indeed suited all Christians who never had been at all *slaves*, and who might more easily have been prevailed upon, by their poverty, to bring themselves into a condition, the evils and inconveniences of which they did not thoroughly know.

g *Abide with God.*] L'Enfant explains παρα τω Θεω *in the sight of God*, (Compare 2 Cor. xi. 11; Eph. v. 21,) and thinks there had been some disorders at Corinth, proceeding from some irregular claim which *Christian slaves* made to liberty, under pretence, that, as Christian brethren, they were equal with their masters.

h *Care*

prudence, of religion, of affection, concur to animate to a mutual care of each other's soul, that most important effort of love, that most solid expression and demonstration of friendship. Nor let the improbability of success be pleaded in excuse for neglect, even where the attempt must be made by the subordinate sex. A *possibility* should be sufficient encouragement; and surely there is room to say, *How knowest thou, O wife, but thou mayest save him*, whose salvation, next to thine own, must be most desirable to thee? SECT. XIII. Ver. 14 16

Let us all study the duties of the relations in which God hath fixed us; and *walk with him in our proper callings*, not desiring so much to exchange, as to improve them. His wise Providence hath *distributed the part*; it is our wisdom, and will be our happiness, to act in humble congruity to that distribution. Surely the *apostle* could not have expressed in stronger terms, his deep conviction of the small importance of human distinctions, than he here does; when speaking of what seems to great and generous minds, the most miserable lot, even that of a *slave*, he says, *Care not for it*[h]. If liberty itself, the first of all temporal blessings, be not of so great importance, as that a man, blessed with the high hopes and glorious consolations of *Christianity*, should make himself very solicitous about it, how much less is there in those comparatively trifling distinctions on which many lay so disproportionate, so extravagant a stress! 24 21

Let *Christian servants* (for blessed be God, amongst us we have no *slaves*,) remember their high privileges, *as the Lord's freemen*. Let *Christian masters* remember the restraint, *as the Lord's servants*. And let the benefits of liberty, especially, when considered in its aspect upon religion, be so far valued, as not to be bartered away for any price which the enemies of mankind may offer in exchange. 22

But above all, let us remember the infinite importance of maintaining the freedom of the mind from the bondage of corruption; and *of keeping*, with all humble and cheerful observance, *the commandments of God*. While many express the warmest zeal for *circumcision*, or *uncircumcision*, in defence of, or in opposition to, this, or that mode or form of external worship, let our hearts be set on what is most vital and essential in religion; and we shall find the happiest equivalent, in the composure and satisfaction of our own spirit now, as well as in those abundant rewards which the Lord hath laid up for them who fear him. 19

SECT.

h *Care not for it.*] This fine remark, (for such indeed it is,) occurs in Dr. *Goodwin's Works*, Vol. I. p. 50.

SECT. XIV.

The apostle treats on the inexpediency of marriage, in the circumstances of the church at that juncture; and inculcates a serious sense of the shortness of time, as the best remedy against immoderate attachment to any secular interest. 1 Cor. VII. 25, *to the end.*

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1 Cor. VII. 25.

1 CORINTHIANS VII. 25.

BUT I have been insensibly led by these general views of our obligations and hopes, as Christians, to digress from the subject of marriage, which I had first in view, and to which it is time I should return. And here, *concerning* the case of *virgins* of either sex, *I have* received *no* express *commandment from the Lord*, as I had in the case handled above; whether by what is transmitted to us in Christ's discourses, or by any immediate and personal revelation [a]; *nevertheless, I give my opinion, as one who hath received* grace and *mercy of the Lord, to be faithful* in the great charge he hath committed to me; and therefore, considering the many instances, in which I have been enabled to approve my fidelity to Christ and his church, may expect to be heard with some peculiar regard.

26 *I apprehend this therefore to be* right and *good in the present exigency* [b] and extremity of affairs, while the church is in such a state of persecution, *that* [*it is*] *best for a* single *man to continue*

27 *as he is. Art thou* indeed *bound to a wife* already? my advice affects not thee; in that case bear patiently whatever burdens may occur, and *seek not to be loosed* from her by an irregular and scandalous divorce or separation. But on the other hand, *art thou loosed from a wife?* Hath Providence never led thee into those engagements, or has it broken the bond by the death of thy former companion? If thou canst conveniently and virtuously continue as thou art, *seek not*

1 Cor. VII. 25.

NOW concerning virgins, I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.

26 I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress. *I say* that *it is* good for a man so to be.

27 Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife.

a Or by immediate and personal revelation.] To this, I think he refers, rather than the former, as he speaks in the singular number; whereas else he might more properly have said, *we* have received none.

b *Present exigency.*] This must certainly refer to the prevalence of *persecution* at that time; for nothing can be more absurd, than to imagine, that an inspired *apostle* would, in the general, discountenance marriage; considering that it was expressly agreeable to a divine institution, and of great importance to the existence and happiness of all future generations.

c *Con-*

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not a wife at present, till the storm which now hovers over the church be a little blown over, and more peaceful times return. *Yet if thou dost marry, thou hast not* thereby *sinned: and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned;* the marriage-state is no doubt both lawful and honourable; *yet such will have* probably some additional *affliction in the flesh;* they will be encumbered with the burden of many temporal affairs; and the representation which I make to you of these things, is not out of severity, *but* tenderness; as *I* would fain *spare you*, and speak on the whole, in this gentle and cautious manner on the subject, to avoid extremes either the one way, or the other.

1 Cor. VII. 28.

28 But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned: and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless, such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.

But this I say brethren, with great confidence; and desire you would hear it with due attention; that *the* whole *time* of our abode in this world *is contracted*[c] within very narrow limits; *it remains therefore*, that we guard against too fond an attachment to any relation or possession in life: so *that they, who have wives, be* in a manner, *as if they had none; And they that weep, as not weeping* in streams of inconsolable sorrow, though nature may be allowed to drop its moderate tear; *and they that rejoice, as not rejoicing* in dissolute and confident sallies of mirth, as if secure from any distressful revolution; *and they that purchase, as not possessing* by a certain tenure what they must shortly resign; *And they who use this world, as not carrying* the enjoyments of *it to an* unbridled *excess; for the* whole scheme and *fashion of this world passes off*[d], and is gone like a scene in a theatre that presently shifts; or a pageant in some public procession, which how gaudily soever it be adorned to strike the eyes of spectators, is still in motion, and presently disappears, to shew itself for a few moments to others. So transitory are all our enjoyments, and afflictions too, and worthy of little regard, when compared

29 But this I say, brethren, the time is short. It remaineth, that both they that have wives, be as though they had none;

30 And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not;

31 And they that use this world, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away.

c *Contracted.*] The word συνεσταλμενος, properly imports this, being, (as many have observed, a *metaphor*, taken from *furling* or gathering up *a sail*. Dr. Hammond, and some others, would render this, *it is but a little while, and they that have wives, shall be as though they had none.* That is, "I see those times of persecution rising, which will put men out of a capacity of enjoying those temporal delights which they may now be fondest of." But this does not seem an exact translation, though L'Enfant mentions it with considerable regard.

d *Fashion of this world passes off.*] Σχημα παραγει. Compare 1 John ii. 17.

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ed with the solid realities which are soon to open upon us, and never to pass away.

1 Cor. VII. 32. *But I would have you without anxiety*, while you continue here amidst all these uncertainties; and therefore it is, I advise you in present circumstances to decline marriage, if you conveniently can. For *an unmarried man careth for the things of the Lord* Jesus Christ, *how he may please the Lord*, and is in a great degree at leisure to employ his thoughts, and schemes, and labours, for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom among men; and sure there is no other employment so honourable, so delightful, and when remote consequences are taken into the

33 account, so profitable: *Whereas he who is married, careth for the things of the world*, how he may maintain his family, and *how he may please* [*his*] *wife*, and so accommodate himself to her

34 temper, as to make her easy and happy. On the other hand, *there is* just such a *difference between* the condition of *a wife and a virgin*[e]. *She who is unmarried, is careful about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit.* She has leisure to attend to the higher improvement of religion in her own soul, by the more abundant exercises of devotion, as well as to do something more for the advancement of religion among others; *whereas she that is married, careth for the things of the world, how she may please* [*her*] *husband*[f]; and the diversity of humours both in men and women, and the imperfection of even the best tempers, make this sometimes on both sides a difficult task; on which account single persons have always some considerable advantages, which are especially apparent in these times of public danger.

35 *But* all *this I say for your own benefit*, with

32 But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried, careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord:

33 But he that is married, careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please *his* wife.

34 There is a difference also between a wife and a virgin: the unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy, both in body and in spirit: but she that is married, careth for the world, how she may please *her* husband.

35 And this I speak for

a

e *There is* just such *a difference*, &c.] Some would connect the word μεμερισται with the close of the preceding *verse*, and render it, "*He that is married, cares, &c. how he may please his wife, and is divided in his thoughts*, or distracted with a variety of anxieties." But this would occasion an unnecessary *ellipsis* in the beginning of this *verse*, and destroy the resemblance between the conclusion of the two *verses*, when it is evident the *apostle* meant to say the same of both the husband and wife.

f *How she may please her husband.*] The *apostle*, in this *text*, and the counter-part to it, seems to declare, that single persons of either sex, have *generally* opportunities for devotion beyond those that are married, even in the most peaceful times of the church; and that a diversity of humours, both in men and women, makes it difficult for them to please each other so thoroughly as is necessary, in order to make a married life delightful. So that it intimates a counsel to *single* people, to value and improve their advantages, and to *married* people, to watch against those things that would ensnare them, and injure their mutual peace and comfort.

g *Not*

for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that you may attend upon the Lord without distraction.

a sincere desire to promote your happiness; and *not that I may throw a snare upon you*[g], and bind you from that which God for wise reasons instituted, and allows, and which the state of human nature generally requires; *but out of regard to what is* to be sure very *comely*[h] *and decent in the Lord, without* any *violent constraint*[i], by which I might seem to drag you into a state of life, which should make you continually uneasy: for that would quite spoil its gracefulness as well as acceptance, and might plunge you into much greater inconveniences another way.

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1 Cor. VII. 35.

36 But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of *her* age, and need so require,

But, on the other hand, *if any* on mature deliberation *apprehend that he acts an unbecoming part towards his virgin*-daughter, or any other maiden, that may fall under his guardianship and care, *if she pass the flower of* [*her*] *age*[k] in a single state; which, I know, is an opinion very prevalent among the Jews; *and* if he think *that* 36

g *Not that I may throw a snare upon you.*] This is the most literal *version* I could give of βροχον υμιν επιβαλω. Mr. Locke thinks the word βροχον, which signifies *cord*, alludes to the Jewish phrase of *binding* what was declared unlawful.

h *Comely:* ευσχημον.] This seems to intimate, that they were now in a circumstance in which God did, as it were, exact a *peculiar* severity from all their thoughts; and that it was a time to think of the trials of *martyrdom*, rather than the endearment of human passions.

i *Without* any *violent constraint.*) Απερισπαστως, is rendered in our translation by the addition of several words, *that ye may attend on the Lord without distraction.* But Sir Norton Knatchbull has convinced me, that the *version* here given is much preferable to *ours*.

k *Pass the flower of her age*, &c.] There is hardly any passage in the *epistle*, about the sense of which I have been more perplexed than about this; and I am still far from being satisfied concerning it. I had once translated it, "*If any one thinks that he acts an unbecoming part, by continuing in his single state, till he be past the flower of his age,—let them marry,—he that marries does well*, &c." and had *paraphrased* the words accordingly. And what induced me to this, was, that, *verse* 37, the *apostle* puts the issue of the matter on the *stedfastness of his own mind, the power he had over his own will*, and *his having no necessity*; whereas if a daughter, or a ward, were in question, *her* inclinations, temper and convenience were certainly to be consulted; and it would be the same, if the virgin spoken of, was one to whom the man was himself engaged. But it is really doing such violence to the *original*, to render τηρειν την εαυτης παρθενον, *keep himself single*, or keep his own virginity; and to render εκγαμιζων, *he that marries*, that after long deliberation I chose to abide by our own *version*; especially since it agrees with most of those I have had an opportunity of consulting. And if this be admitted, I think it must be taken for granted, that when the *apostle* speaks of this man's having no *necessity*, he means to take in whatever might urge him to dispose of her in marriage, whether in her temper and inclinations, or in their domestic circumstances.—As for Heinsius's opinion, that ασχημονειν επι την παρθενον, signifies, *to incur shame by reason of his virgin*;" meaning, if a man apprehend that his daughter will dishonour his family by fornication, he will do prudently to marry her: I think the above mentioned objection lies equally against this interpretation. But if the Alexandrine reading of γαμιζων, instead of εκγαμιζων, be admitted, it may deserve consideration, whether the whole passage may not refer to the case of a contract between a man and a young maiden, the accomplishment, or dissolution of which, might, in some imaginable circumstances, depend very much on the conduct of the man, as he seemed to urge, or decline, the bringing it into effect.

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that it ought to be so, let him do what he will in this respect: *he sinneth not* in his intent of letting her change her present condition; and therefore let him seek out a proper partner in life for her, and *let them marry. But he that hath* hitherto *stood stedfast in his heart, having* also on her side *no* apprehension of any *necessity*, in consequence of what he discerns of her dispositions, and no engagement subsisting which might give another a just claim to her, *but hath power over his own will*, being at liberty to act as he pleases; *and hath* in such circumstances *determined in his* own *heart that he will keep his maiden* still single, he *does well*, and the part he acts is so far from being blameable, that in present circumstances it is much to be commended, *So that* on the whole, the conclusion of the matter is this; *he, that* in such troublous times as these *gives* [*her*] *in marriage doeth well;* she may find opportunities in that relation both to adorn and to serve Christianity; *but* as things are circumstanced, I must needs declare, that where a man is under no necessity of doing it, *he that gives* [*her*] *not in marriage, doeth better;* and more effectually consults both his comfort and safety.

1 Cor. VII. 36. 37. 38.

require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry.

37 Nevertheless, he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart, that he will keep his virgin, doeth well.

38 So then, he that giveth *her* in marriage, doeth well: but he that giveth *her* not in marriage, doeth better.

39 This however is beyond controversy certain, that *the wife is bound by the law* to continue with her husband, and submit herself to him, *as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is* in that case *free, and may marry to whom she will; only* let her take care that she marry *in the Lord*, and that, retaining a sense of the importance of her Christian obligations, she does not choose a partner for life of a different religion from herself. She may, I say, lawfully act thus; *but* I would not be understood to advise it; for *she is happier according to my sentiment, if she continue as she is: and* I may modestly say, that *I appear to have the spirit of God*[1] to guide me; and not merely some degree of experience, arising from the many observations which for a course of years I have made on human affairs. I may therefore reasonably suppose

39 The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth: but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.

40 But she is happier, if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also, that I have the Spirit of God.

[1] *I appear to have the Spirit of God.*] It is very unreasonable for any to infer from hence, that St. Paul was uncertain whether he was inspired or not. Whereas this is only a modest way of speaking; and δοκω εχειν, often signifies the same with εχω. Compare Luke viii. 18; with Mat. xiii. 12; 1 Cor. x. 1, 2, chap. xiv. 37. And the ambiguity in the expression, *appear to have*, seems exactly to correspond to the ambiguity of this original phrase.

pose my judgment will have its peculiar weight, even where I do not pretend to decide with such an authority as should bind the conscience as by an apostolical dictate. SECT. XIV. 1 Cor. VII. 40.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us observe the humility of the excellent *apostle* with pleasure. When he speaks of his fidelity in the *ministry*, he tells us, *he obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.* Edified by such an example, let us ascribe to *Christ* the praise, not only of our endowments, but our virtues; even to him *who worketh in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure.* Ver. 25

Let us seriously contemplate the affecting lesson which the *apostle* here gives of the *shortness of time;* and infer how much it is our wisdom to loosen our affections from the things of this vain world, which are ready to ingross so disproportionate a share in them. Let us look upon the world as a *transient pageant*, and not *set our eyes* and our hearts *on that which is not.* We expect, instead of these transitory vanities and empty shews, *a kingdom that cannot be moved;* in the expectation of which let us be solicitous to *please the Lord;* making the best of our opportunities, and guarding against all that may unnecessarily divert our minds, and divide our *cares*, from what will at length appear *the one thing needful.* 29 30 31 32

Let us attentively reflect upon the advantages and snares of our respective conditions in life; that we may improve the one, and escape, as far as possible, all injury from the other. Let those who are *single*, employ their leisure for God; and endeavour to collect a stock of *Christian* experience which may support them, when the duties and difficulties, the cares and sorrows of life, may be multiplied. Let those who are *married*, with mutual tender regard endeavour to *please* each other, and make the relation into which providence hath conducted them, as comfortable and agreeable as they can. And whatever cares press upon their minds, or demand their attention, let them order their affairs with such discretion, that they may still secure a due proportion of their time for the *things of the Lord.* 33, 34

If any in their consciences are persuaded, that by continuing single they shall best answer the purposes of religion, and promote the good of their fellow-creatures, in conjunction with their own; let them do it. As for those that *marry*, whether a first, or a second time, let them *do it in the Lord;* acting in the choice of their most intimate friend and companion, as the *servants of Christ;* who are desirous that their conduct may be approved by him, 35--38 39

SECT. XIV. him, and that any avocations and interruptions in his service, which may be occasioned, even in those peaceful times, by marriage, may be, in some measure, balanced, by the united prayers, prudent counsels, and edifying converse of those with whom they unite in this tender and indissoluble bond.

SECT. XV.

The Apostle proceeds to consider the case of eating things sacrificed to idols; and reminds them, that though all Christians might well be supposed to know the vanity of those imaginary deities to which they were offered, yet it might prove an occasion of grief and scandal, that the professors of Christianity should partake of these sacrifices in their temple; which therefore charity would require them by all means to avoid. 1 Cor. VIII. *throughout.*

1 CORINTHIANS VIII. 1.

1 Cor. VIII. 1. NOW as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.

SECT. XV. I *NOW* proceed to consider the other cases about which you consulted me; particularly that *concerning things sacrificed to idols;* and here it may be observed, that *we know, we all have*, as Christians, that general *knowledge* of the vanity of these fictitious deities of which some are ready to boast, as if it were an extraordinary matter, and which they sometimes are in danger of abusing, by making it the foundation of liberties which may be very detrimental. But let it be remembered, that *knowledge* often *puffeth up*[a], and is the occasion of great self-conceit and arrogance: *whereas* it is considerate *love*, and gentle tenderness, that *edifies*, and has such a happy effect in building up the church of Christ. *And* indeed, *if any one think that he knoweth any thing*, if he be conceited of his knowledge, so as to neglect and despise his brethren, and upon account of his supposed superiority in that respect, set a very high value upon himself, it appears, that *he as yet knows nothing as he ought to know it*, and needs to be taught the very first and most essential principles of that knowledge which is truly ornamental and useful. *But if any man love God*, and shew it

1 Cor. VIII. 1.

2 And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.

3 But if any man love

a *Knowledge puffeth up.*] *Elsner, (Observ.* Vol. II. p. 96,) acknowledges that as Bos, and Erasmus Schmidius, contend, there is a *parenthesis* here; but he thinks it begins in the middle of the first *verse*, and ends after the first clause of the 4th, *we have all knowledge—we know that an idol is nothing*, &c.

b *He*

love God, the same is known of him.

it by a steady regard for the Divine glory, and the good of his brethren, *he is* indeed *known of him* [b], this man hath attained the true knowledge of God, and will be sure of his approbation and favour. *Therefore,* to proceed to the question in debate, *concerning the eating of* the *things sacrificed to idols, we* well *know that an idol* [*is*] in itself *nothing in the world* [c], but a mass of senseless matter, and when regarded in a religious view, so empty a vanity, that it deserves not to be named among the things that exist. *And* we all know *that there* [*is*] indeed *no other God, but* that *one* glorious and transcendent Being, to which the gospel hath taught us to appropriate our worship. *For though there are* many *which are called gods, whether* residing *in heaven, or on earth,* or even under the earth; for the heathens have not only their celestial, and terrestrial, but likewise their infernal deities *as there are many gods, and many lords,* who are in their various subordination adored by the Gentiles, and have great though very absurd worship paid to them. *Nethertheless, to us,* [*there is but*] *one God, the Father* [d] of angels and men, *from whom* [*are*] *all things* in created nature; *and we* derived our being from him, were made *for him,* and for his glory: *and* there is also but *one Lord,* even *Jesus Christ,* the only Mediator between God and man, *by whom* [*are*] *all things* created, supported, and guided, *and we by him,* thankfully owning ourselves obliged to his agency and care for all we are, and have, or hope to obtain. These are grand principles, in which all intelligent Christians are agreed; and it would be happy

SECT. XV.

1 Cor. VIII. 4.

4 As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol *is* nothing in the world, and that *there is* none other God but one.

5 For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many.)

6 But to us *there is but* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we in him: and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom *are* all things, and we by him.

5

6

b *He is known of him.*] Most understand it, *he is approved by God*, as to *know*, sometimes undoubtedly signifies, Mr. Locke would render it, *he is instructed by him.* But I acquiesce in Mr. Pierce's reasoning, in his 6th Dissertation, to prove the construction followed in the *paraphrase*, by a construction like that of the *original* of Acts x. 36. where ὑμᾶς plainly refers to the immediate *antecedent.*

c *We know that an idol is nothing in the world.*] Dr. Whitby shews this was a common *aphorism* among the Jewish doctors to which the word אלילים, the name given them, did probably allude. Mons. *Saurin* thinks it so hard to reconcile this with what the *apostle* says elsewhere, that he judges it necessary to understand this as an objection made by one of the Corinthians, with whom he is disputing, *Saur. Disc.* Vol. II. p. 476—481. But I cannot from an impartial view of the context, give into his interpretation. See Elsner's learned *note* here on εἰδωλον and *Simulachrum.*

d *One God, the Father.*] In answer to the argument drawn from hence against the *Deity of Christ*, see Dr. Guyse on this place; and *Dr. Edm. Calamy's Serm. on the Trinity*, p. 25 and 244. The Person, to whom the *Son*, as Lord or Mediator, introduces us, is undoubtedly the *Father*, nor is the *Son* to be considered as *another* God. But it is not the design of these *notes*, largely to discuss *theological* controversies.

e *Sitting*

SECT. XV.

happy, if they kept them steadily and consistently in view.

I Cor. VIII. 7. You are possessed of these apprehensions of things: it is well; *But* you ought to remember, that [*there is*] *not in all men this knowledge.* Some Christian converts may not sufficiently apprehend this; *but* may imagine there is really some invisible spirit present in the idol, and acting by and upon it. And in consequence of this, *some do, even until now, with consciousness of* some religious regard to *the idol, eat the things* in question, *as* what is *sacrificed to the idol*, intending thereby to pay some homage; *and* so their *conscience being* too *weak* to withstand a temptation to what in these circumstances is really evil, *is defiled*, and brought under a grievous and terrifying load of guilt.

7 Howbeit, *there is* not in every man that knowledge: for some, with conscience of the idol unto this hour, eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.

8 *But* why should we occasion this inconvenience? For we know, that *meat commends us not* in any degree, *to* the acceptance and favour of *God; for neither are we the better, if we eat, nor the worse, if we eat not.* The great God does not so much esteem a man for being, or disapprove him for not being, superior to such little scruples; but the tenderness of his conscience, together with the zeal and charity of his heart, are the grand qualities he regards.

8 But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither if we eat, are we the better; neither if we eat not, are we the worse.

9 *But take heed, lest this* power and *liberty of yours, be by any means a stumbling-block*, and occasion of sin, *to the weak*, with whom you converse, or who observe your conduct, perhaps with more regard than you pay to it yourselves.

9 But take heed, lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak.

10 *For if any one see thee, who hast* this boasted, *knowledge, sitting down* to an entertainment *in an idol's temple*[e], as freely as thou wouldest in thine own house, and partaking of his sacrifices as cheerfully as if they were the common provisions of thine own table; though this may indeed arise from that sovereign contempt in which thou holdest that idle fiction of deity; can he know that situation of thy mind? And *will not the conscience of him that is* thus *weak* and

10 For if any man see thee, which hast knowledge, sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols?

e *Sitting down* to an entertainment *in an idol's temple.*] How commonly entertainments among the heathen consisted of what had been sacrificed to their fictitious deities, and how religiously the christians abstained from them, even when most rigorously imposed, *Elsner* has shewn by many very apposite citations; (*Observ.* Vol. II. p. 96, and no doubt the *apostle's* decision here had great weight with them. That these feasts were often celebrated in their temples, the same learned *critic* has abundantly shewn, in his *notes* on this clause; and it is strange that Chemnitius, and Erasmus, should ever have doubted it.

and who perhaps feels some scruples in his own mind about it, *be encouraged* by thy example *to eat of the idol-sacrifice* with some sentiments of superstitious regard? *And* so *shall the weak brother, for whom* the Lord Jesus *Christ* himself *died*, be liable to *perish by thy knowledge*, in this instance, mischievous rather than useful; so that when thou makest a vain ostentation of it, thou dost in effect pride thyself in thy brother's ruin. SECT. XV. 1 Cor. VIII. 11.

11 And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?

12 But when ye sin so against the brethren and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.

Imagine not this to be an inconsiderable evil; 12 *but* on the contrary, rather know, that *when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak consciences*, leading them into guilt, and hazarding their salvation, *you* greatly *sin against Christ;* who had such a tenderness for souls, that he died to redeem them, and hath done all that example, or precept, can do, to make his followers enter into such humane and compassionate views.

13 Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

Therefore it is a determined point with me, 13 upon these principles, that *if meat* of any kind *scandalize my brother*, and lead him into sin, *I* would not only abstain, now and then, from this or that agreeable food, but *would never as long as I live*[f], *eat* any sort of *flesh*. I would subsist entirely on vegetables, *that I may not scandalize*, and ensnare *my brother;* if there be no other way of avoiding it. Of such importance should I esteem the preservation of one endangered soul. And herein I wish that God may give you the like self-denial, both for your own sakes, and for the peace and honour of the Christian church.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us learn from this short, but excellent chapter, to estimate Ver. 1 the true value of *knowledge*, and to see how worthless and dangerous it is, when, instead of discovering to us our own ignorance and weakness, it serves only to puff up the mind. Let us rather labour and pray for that love and charity which edifieth ourselves and others; taking heed, that we do not demonstrate 2 our ignorance, by a high conceit of our attainments in knowledge; for nothing can more evidently shew, how small those attainments are, than not to know their limits, when these limits so soon meet

[f] *As long as I live*: εις τον αιωνα.] We render it, *as long as the world stands*. But the sense plainly limits the expression, (which might simply have been rendered *never*) to the sense here given.

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meet us, on what side soever we attempt to make an excursion. "Give us, O Lord, that *love* to thee which is the best proof of our *knowledge*, and the surest way to its highest improvement."

Ver. 3, 4, 5 Let us always remember the grand principle of the *unity of God*; and with the one God and Father of all adore the one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we exist; setting him in our estimation far above all the powers, dignities, and glories, of created nature.

Belonging to so Divine a Master, let us endeavour to learn the most generous principles of true religion. Let us not found our 8 confidence on admitting, and contending for, or despising, and deriding, this or that particular observance, by which, as it may happen to be circumstanced, God is neither honoured, nor dishonoured, pleased, nor displeased. But let us ever maintain the tenderest concern for the edification and comfort of our brethren; and guard against whatever might either grieve or ensnare them. 9 Let us remember, that *Christ died* for the *weakest* as well as the 11 strongest; and let their relation to him, and his tender and compassionate regard for them, melt down our hearts, when seized with that cold insensibility, which, alas, is too ready to prevail amongst christians! It is Christ we wound, in wounding our bre- 12 thren; and in smiting them, we smite him.

Let us then stay that rash hand which is so ready in mere wantonness to do mischief; and be willing to *deny* ourselves in any desire, for ever so long a time, rather than by our indul- 13 gence to dishonour God, and injure others. This is the excellent lesson St. Paul often inculcates, of which he was an eminent and illustrious example. But O, how low are multitudes of christians, multitudes of ministers fallen, when they cannot deny themselves in what is unnecessary, and even unlawful where either interest or pleasure solicit the gratification!

SECT. XVI.

The Apostle, proposing to illustrate his condescension to the weak, by his waving to accept of a maintenance from the Corinthians, introduces what he had to say on that head with a short discourse on the right, which as a gospel-minister he really had, to be supported by those among whom he laboured; which he argues both from natural equity and scripture principles. 1 Cor. IX. 1—14.

1 CORINTHIANS IX. 1.

SECT. XVI.

WHILE I thus speak of the concern I have to avoid what may prove an occasion of injury to weak brethren, it leads my thoughts to the part I have acted, while I resided among you

1 Cor. IX. 1.

1 COR. IX. 1. AM I not an apostle? am I not free? have I

SECT. XVI.

1 Cor. IX. 1.

1 not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not you my work in the Lord?

you in declining to take that maintenance from you which I might very justly have expected and demanded. And here you must give me leave to express my surprise, as well as my concern, to hear, that so unkind and unnatural a construction has been put upon my generosity and tenderness, as if I had declined to accept your contributions, from a consciousness of not being intitled to them as well as my brethren. But can you really imagine that to be the case? *Am not I*, as truly as any man living, *an apostle* of Jesus Christ? *Am not I* as *free* in this instance, as any other, and may I not, as justly as they, expect to be maintained by you, while I am serving your best interests? *Have not I*, though called so much later than my brethren, *seen Jesus Christ our Lord*[a], after his resurrection, so as to be able to testify the important fact on my own knowledge, as confidently as those that were earlier acquainted with him? And, to urge so plain a point no farther, *are not ye* Corinthians, particularly, *my work in the Lord*, and the evident token of his blessing on my apostolical labours? On this account, *if I am not an apostle to* some *others*, *yet I doubtless am so to you*, who of all people in the world can shew the least excuse for questioning my mission: *for ye are* indeed *the seal of my apostleship in the Lord;* and the extraordinary success I have had among you, if others should doubt of my commission, might furnish out a proof of it also to them.

2 If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.

2

3 Mine answer to them that do examine me, is this,

This therefore *is my apology to those who examine* and censure *me*, as to this part of my conduct. Does my waving the use of a privilege prove that I have it not? *Have we not*, both in natural equity, and according to the Divine constitution, the same *power*, as others in the same office, *to eat and to drink*, and to subsist ourselves at the expence of those among whom we labour? Yea, *have we not power to lead about* [*with us*] in our apostolic travels, (if we think it necessary,) *a sister*, whom we might take for *a wife*[b], *as* some of *the other apostles and*

3

4 Have we not power to eat and to drink?

4

5 Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles and as

5

a *Have I not seen the Lord*, &c.] That this was necessary, in order to his being an *apostle*, that is, *a witness of Christ's resurrection*, has before been observed. See Vol. VII, p. 483, *note* g. Compare Acts xxii. 14, 15, chap. xxvi. 16; 1 Cor. xv. 8.

b *A sister, a wife.*] The word γυναικα, has no force at all here, if it be rendered *a woman: a sister* must undoubtedly be *a woman:* not to say, how improbable it is that the *apostle* should have carried about with him, in these sacred preregrinations,

SECT. XVI.

and the brethren of the Lord do, *and Peter*[c] in particular; and to expect, that she likewise, as well as ourselves, should be provided for by those to whom we have done such important services, as nothing of this kind can ever requite?

1 Cor. IX. 5.

as the brethren of the Lord and Cephas?

6 *Or* can it be thought there is any thing singular in my case, or in that of my present companions, that it *should* rob me of the liberties others have; so that *I only, and Barnabas*[d], should *not have power to decline working* with our own hands for a maintenance, while we are preach-

6 Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working?

7 ing the gospel? I might here insist indeed on the natural equity of the thing, that they who devote themselves to the service of the public, should be supported by the public whom they serve. *Who*, for instance, *ever goes to war at his own charge?* The community furnishes out provision for those who guard it, and fight its battles. And if the services of a soldier deserve that maintenance, which, while engaged in the defence of their country, men cannot earn, how much more may it be expected by us, who daily hazard our lives, as well as wear them out, for men's everlasting happiness? *Who planteth a vineyard, and doth not* expect to *eat of its fruit? Or who feedeth a flock, and doth not* think he hath a right to *eat of the milk of the flock?* And if it be judged reasonable, that men should have an equivalent for their labours about natural things, and the accommodations of the body, is it not more evidently so, when the felicity of immortal souls is concerned?

7 Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?

8 But *do I speak these things* merely *as a man*, upon principles of human reason alone. *And doth*

8 Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also?

9 *not the* Jewish *law speak also the same? For* there is a passage in the sacred volume, on which the like argument may be built, (I mean, Deut. XXV. 4,) where *it is written*, even *in the law of Moses*

9 For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the

nations, a woman to whom he was not married. So that the answer which the Papists generally make to the argument often brought from these words, in favour of a married clergy, is absolutely inconclusive.

c *And Peter.*] This is an important clause, both as it declares in effect that St. Peter continued to live with his wife after he became an *apostle;* and also that St. Peter had no rights, as an *apostle*, which were not common to St. Paul. A remark utterly subversive of popery, if traced to its obvious consequences.

d *I only, and Barnabas.*] From this expression one would indeed think, that the *Judaizing Christians*, who were the main cause of St. Paul's uneasiness in this respect, had a peculiar spleen against those two *apostles of the uncircumcision*; who were so instrumental in procuring and publishing the *Jerusalem decree*, which determined the controversy so directly in favour of the believing Gentiles.—It seems probable from the 12th *verse*, that Barnabas supported himself by the labour of his hands, when at Corinth, as well as St. Paul.

e *That*

the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen?

Moses itself, for which some have so distinguishing a regard, "*Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn*[e]," but shalt allow the poor animal to feed, while it is labouring for thee, in the midst of food: a circumstance in which its hunger would be peculiarly painful. Now *is God* so *solicitous about oxen*, that he intended this precept merely for their relief? *Or doth he say* [*this*] with a farther view, and *on the whole*[f], *for our sakes? Surely*, we may conclude, he intended such precepts as these, relating to compassion to the brutes, in some measure at least *for our sakes*, to humanize the heart with generous and compassionate sentiments, and to make men much more tender to each other, where their various interests are concerned. I may therefore apply it to the case before us, as entirely comprehended in his extensive universal views; and say, for us indeed *was* [*it*] *written*, that the necessary offices of life might be more cheerfully performed, in the expectation of such due acknowledgments; *that he, who ploweth, might plow in hope* of success, *and that he who thresheth in* such *hope*, should not be disappointed, but *should* in proper time *partake of his hope*, and possess the good for which he has laboured. And surely, admits his care for others who are in meaner offices of life, God could not intend, that the ministers of the gospel alone should be sunk under continual discouragement, neglect, and ill-usage.

SECT. XVI.

1 Cor. IX. 9.

10 Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? for our sakes, no doubt, *this* is written: That he that ploweth, should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope, should be partaker of his hope.

10

11 If we have sown unto you spiritual things, *is it* a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?

And indeed when we consider what great benefactors these persons are to the souls amongst whom they labour with success, the reasonableness of the conclusion will appear beyond all contradiction. For *if we*, by our incessant diligence in preaching to you the gospel of the blessed God, *have sown unto you spiritual things*, which may spring up in a harvest of eternal blessings, [*is it*] *any great matter that we* should *reap your carnal things?* Is there the least proportion between any thing which your liberality can impart to us, and that which we have been the happy instruments of imparting to you? This

11

e *That treadeth out the corn.*] It is well known that this was the custom in Judea, and other *eastern* nations. It is still retained by many of them, and particularly in Ceylon. Raphelius has produced passages from Xenophon, which something illustrates it.

f *On the whole.*] It cannot be thought that God had no regard at all to the Brute-creatures in such precepts as these; and therefore I thought it better to render παντως, *on the whole*, than *entirely* or *altogether*, though that sense is more frequent.

g *Partake*

SECT. xvi.

This is the privilege of ministers in general, and it is a privilege which you well know some of them have exerted. And *if others* are so readily allowed to *partake of* [*this*] *power over you*[g], [*shall*] *not we rather* claim it, with yet more evident and apparent reason, who have been the means, not only of edifying and instructing you, but likewise of calling you into the profession of Christianity? *But we have not made use of this power*, though founded in such evident and various principles of equity. *But we* rather choose to *endure all things*, the fatigues of labour, and inconveniences of frequent necessity, *that we may not occasion any hindrance to the gospel of Christ*[h], from the cavils of ill-disposed people, who are always watchful for opportunities to misrepresent and censure our conduct.

1 Cor. IX. 12.

12 If others be partakers of *this* power over you, *are* not we rather? Nevertheless, we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.

13 But though I do not now ask any thing of this kind for myself, yet I will not give up the justice of the demand. And I might farther support it, from the provision which God made for the priests and Levites, under the Mosaic law. *Know ye not* therefore, *that they who are employed about holy things, are fed out of* the provisions which belong to *the temple*, *and* [*that*] *they who wait upon the* service of the *altar*, *are partakers with the altar*, in a part of the victims offered on it, particularly the vows and
14 the sacrifices of peace-offerings: And it is farther to be considered, that *so also*, that is, on principles like these, *the Lord* Jesus Christ himself *hath* expressly commanded and *ordained that they who preach the gospel should live* and subsist *upon the gospel*[i]; when he declares, as you know

13 Do ye not know, that they which minister about holy things, live *of the things* of the temple? and they which wait at the altar, are partakers with the altar?

14 Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

g *Partake of* [*this*] *power*, &c.] Mr. Pyle thinks this refers to the other *apostles* of Christ; but I rather think St. Paul intended to glance on the *false* teachers who carried their claims of this right to such an exhorbitant height, though their services had been by no means comparable to those of the *apostle*. Compare 2 Cor, xi. 20.—Mr. Locke would here read ωσιας υμων, of *your substance*; but Matt. x. 1; John xvii. 2; and many other places, prove that εξουσιας υμων, may properly be rendered, *power over you*.

h *Hindrance to the gospel.*] From the conduct of the other *apostles*, and of St, Paul at other places, particularly among the Macedonian churches, we may conclude, that he might see some circumstances at Corinth, (not necessary for us exactly to know,) which determined him to decline accepting of any subsistence from them while he resided there.

i *Live upon the gospel.*] Mr. *Mede* understands ευαγγελιον here, of *the reward given for bringing a good message*, (see *Diatribi in loc.*) and shews, that the word sometimes has that meaning in heathen authors: but it is a very uncommon signification in the *sacred*, and therefore not to be admitted, without farther proof.—That man might be said *to live on the gospel*, who was maintained for preaching it; as he might be said to live *on the temple*, who was supported out of its income, for ministering there, though the word *temple* has the usual signification.

know more than one of the evangelists assures us he did, "that the labourer is worthy of his hire." Compare Mat. x. 10; Luke x. 7. SECT. XVI. 1 Cor. IX. 14.

IMPROVEMENT.

MAY the disciples of *Christ* learn from these instructions, *to honour the Lord with their substance, and the first-fruits of all their increase!* And may they feel those happy effects attending the ministration of the *gospel*, and reap such an abundant harvest of *spiritual blessings*, that the imparting *temporal* subsistence and accommodation, to those who are the instruments of conveying them, may not be matter of constraint, but of free and affectionate choice! May the *ministers* of *Christ*, while they thankfully accept of that subsistence, which Providence, by the instrumentality of their brethren, sends them, ever act a moderate and generous part, and maintain such a visible superiority to all secular views, as may do an honour to the *gospel*, and command veneration to themselves! Ver. 1-7 11

May the secular advantages of the office never invite bad men into it; nor its discouragements deter good men from undertaking it. And whatever censures a malignant world, who themselves know not any higher motives than self-interest, shall pass, may the *ministers* of *Jesus* ever have a testimony in their consciences, *that they seek not the properties, but the souls*, of their hearers!

Let us attend to the humane genius of the *Mosaic* law, manifested in the precepts which relate even to the brutes. And remember, that it is the character, and should be the care of *a merciful man*, to extend *mercy to his beast*. Much more then let us shew compassion to our fellow-men. Let us not desire to enjoy the benefit of their labours, even in the lowest employments of life, without giving them some valuable equivalent. Let us bear towards all, the hearts of equitable and generous brethren, and constantly wish the prosperity and happiness of the human family. On the whole, may there be between the teachers, and those who are taught by them, a continual intercourse of benevolent affections, and friendly actions; as becomes those who stand in such an endearing relation to each other, and have, as *Christians*, the honour of being intimately related to that blessed Redeemer, who *sought not his own* things, but *ours*, and hath thereby laid the strongest engagement upon us, if we have any spark of gratitude and honour, *not to seek our own things, but his?* 8-10

SECT. XVII.

The apostle illustrates the condescension and tenderness of his conduct towards the Corinthians, in declining to accept of their contributions; and speaks of his self-denial under a very expressive simile, taken from those who contended in those Grecian games with which they were familiarly acquainted. 1 Cor. IX. 15, *to the end.*

SECT. xvii.

1 Cor. IX. 15.

1 CORINTHIANS IX. 15.

I HAVE thought it my duty, in the foregoing discourse, to plead the natural and the evangelical rights which the ministers of the gospel have to be maintained by the people, to whose spiritual edification they give their time and labours. *But* you well know that *I myself* during my abode among you, *have used none of these things; nor have I written thus, that* if, according to my purpose and hope, I ever should visit you again, *it should hereafter be so done unto me.* I think of the generous and self-denying part, which I have acted among you, in declining, *for* some particular reasons, to take a maintenance, with a pleasure so great, that I may even say, [*it were*] *better for me to die* for want of the necessary supplies of life, *than that any man* among you *should make* this *my boasting void*, by having it to say, that I have eaten his bread, and been supported at his ex-
16 pence. *For if I preach the gospel*, after what hath happened in my singular case, *I have no* [*matter of*] *boasting* in that, *for*, having received such a commission, how could I refuse! I may say, *a* kind of invincible *necessity lieth upon me, and woe to me* indeed, *If I preach not the gospel.* To decline a work, assigned to me by so condescending an appearance of Christ, when with malicious rage I was attempting to destroy his church, would be an instance of ingratitude and obstinacy, deserving the most
17 dreadful and insupportable condemnation *If indeed I do this voluntarily*, and shew upon every occasion a cordial willingness to do it, *I have* indeed some room to expect *a reward*, *but if* I do it *unwillingly*, as I said before, *a dispensation is intrusted to me*, and I must of necessity
18 fulfil it. *What then is* that circumstance in *my* conduct, for which I may expect *a reward* of praise

1 COR. IX. 15.

BUT I have used none of these things. Neither have I written these things that it should be so done unto me: for *it were* better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void.

16 For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel!

17 For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation *of the gospel* is committed unto me,

18 What is my reward then? verily that when I preach the gospel,

pel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge that I abuse not my power in the gospel.

19 For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.

20 And unto the Jews, I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law.

21 To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,)

praise from the mouth of my Divine Master? *Surely* this, *that when I preach the gospel of Christ, I may render it unexpensive; that so I may* be sure *not* in the least degree to *abuse my power in the gospel* to any low and secular purposes, or carry it beyond its due bounds. *For* in this respect, *being free from all men*, and under no obligation, in this manner, to give them my labours, *I made myself the servant of all*[a], addicting myself to the most fatiguing duties, *that I might* advance their happiness, and *gain the more* to true religion and salvation; in which I have found a noble equivalent for all I could do, or bear. *And* I not only submitted to preach the gospel without any reward, but I made it a constant maxim, to accommodate my manner of living to the way and relish of those about me; sacrificing my own humour and inclination; and that, in some instances, when I could not do it, without considerable inconvenience to myself: accordingly, *to the Jews, I became as a Jew*[b], *that I might gain* over more of *the Jews* to Christianity: *to those*, I say, *who were*, or apprehended themselves to be, *under the* tedious ceremonies and disagreeable restraints of the Mosaic *law*, I became, *as* if I were still in conscience *under the* obligations of the *law*[c], though I knew it to have been abolished; and this, *that I might gain those* who apprehended themselves to be *under the* bond of that *law*. On the other hand, *to those* who were *without the law* of Moses, and either unacquainted with it, or apprehended themselves under no obligation to conform to its peculiar institutions, I behaved *as* if I had myself also been *without the law*, neglecting its ceremonial precepts, which I well knew to be superseded and abolished. [*Yet*] still taking care that

SECT. XVII.

1 Cor. IX. 18.

19

20

21

a *The servant of all.*] This has a stronger sense than can easily be expressed in the *paraphrase*; and intimates, that he acted with as self-denying a regard to their interests, and as much caution not to offend them, as if he were absolutely in their power, as a *slave* is in that of his *master*.

b *To the Jews*, &c.] Compare, for the illustration of this, Acts xvi. 3, chap. xxi. 21, &c. which instances were undoubtedly a specimen of many more of the like kind.

c *As* if I were still *under* the obligations of the *law*.] This can only signify, that he voluntarily complied with it, as an *indifferent thing*; but it cannot by any means imply, that he declared such observances *necessary*, or refused to converse with any, who would not conform to them; for this was the very *dissimulation*, which, with so generous a freedom, he condemned in St. Peter, Gal. ii. 14, &c.

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that it might appear both from my words and actions, that I was *not without law to God; but* apprehended myself *under a law* of the most affectionate duty and gratitude *to Christ*, who came by new bonds to engage us to the strictest obedience. But these freedoms I used, and this moderation I manifested, not by any means for my own indulgence, but *that I might gain those* who are *without the law*[d], and make my ministry more agreeable and useful to such as were educated among the Gentiles. I therefore *became to the weak, as* if I had been as weak and scrupulous as they, in the various articles of food and dress which might come into question, *that I might gain* upon *the weak;* for the soul of the weakest appeared to me infinitely valuable; and I have the warrant of my great Master to esteem it more precious than all the treasures of the world. In a word, *I became all things to all men:* accommodating myself to them, so far as with a safe conscience I could, *that by any*, or all *means* if possible *I might save some:* and it is the daily grief of my soul, that after all these efforts the number is so small.

1 Cor. IX. 21. Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law.

22 To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

23 *And this I do for the sake of the gospel*, to promote its success to the utmost of my ability; *that I* also *may be a sharer in* the generous pleasure arising from the communication of it[e].

23 And this I do for the gospel's-sake, that I might be partaker thereof with *you*.

24 I may illustrate this, by referring to the games so well known in Greece; and particularly to the Isthmian, so often celebrated among you at Corinth. *Do you not know, that* with respect to *those who run in the* stadium or foot-*race*[f], *all indeed run*, and contend with each other: whereas *but one receiveth the prize*[g]? Yet

24 Know ye not that they which run in a race, run all, but one re-

d *That I might gain those without the law.*] This seems to imply that the Gentiles not yet converted to Christianity, are here referred to; unless *gaining* the person spoken of signifies, rendering them, "better disposed to regard his decisions," which is at most but a subordinate sense.

e *A sharer in the* communication of *it.*] We render it, *that I might be partaker with you*, but as the words, *with you*, are not in the *original*, which is ινα συγκοινωνος αυτου γενωμαι, I rather understand the words as referring to the satisfaction he found in *imparting* the invaluable and inexhaustible blessings of the *gospel* to *all* around him; a sentiment most suitable to his character and office.

f *The* stadium or foot-*race.*] On comparing the *translation* I had before made of this passage, with that of my learned and worthy friend Mr. *West*, (in his excellent *Dissertation on the Olympic Games*, p. 189, 190,) I had the pleasure to find a remarkable agreement; but where there was any difference, I have generally altered what I had wrote, either in the *version* or *paraphrase*, to make it conformable to his: whose judgment, in any point of *criticism*, has with me great weight; but especially on a subject of which he appears to have been so eminent a master, that his writings upon it are as distinguished in their kind, as the games he so elegantly describes were in theirs.

g *One receiveth the prize.*] It is true, that in some games there were *several* prizes

receiveth the prize? So run that ye may obtain.

Yet the uncertain hope, that each may be that one, animates them all to strain every nerve in the course. You have much greater encouragement to exert yourselves in the pursuit of celestial blessings. See to it therefore, that ye *so run as that ye may obtain*, and that ye lay aside every thing that would be an incumbrance to you, or render you incapable of dispatching the race with necessary vigour and alacrity. SECT. xvii. 1 Cor. IX. 24.

25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things: Now they *do* it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an uncorruptible.

And every one who contendeth in the games, whether in running, as above, or in wrestling, or combating, *is temperate in all things*[h]; abstaining from whatever might enervate his strength, and submitting to a regular course of diet, exercise and hardship, that he may be the more capable of exerting himself with success. [*And this*] *they indeed* [*do*], *that they may obtain a corruptible crown*[i], a garland of leaves, that will soon wither and perish: *but we* are animated by the view of *an incorruptible* crown, the duration, and glory of which, will be commensurate to the existence of our immortal souls. 25

26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight,

It is no small pleasure to me, while I am exhorting you to this, to reflect that I am, through Divine grace, myself an example of the temperance I recommend. *I for my part run not, as one who is to pass undistinguished*[k]; but knowing what eyes are upon me, and solicitous to 26

prizes of different value; yet in those to which he here refers, there was but *one* for the victor, and the argument is very strong and striking.

h *Temperate in all things.*] Whoever considers on the one hand, to what great self-denial, in articles of food, sleep, and every other sensual indulgence, they, who were to contend in their *games*, were obliged; and on the other, of how great importance it is, that the youth of a community should be formed to a manly taste, and resolute self-government; will undoubtedly see the great national prudence of the Greeks, in the institution and support of these *games*; to which it is very probable their remarkable valour and success in war, during the best days of their several republics, might in some considerable degree be owing. See, for the illustration of the temperance here referred to, Elsner's excellent *note* on this *text*, and *Ælian. Var. Hist. lib.* III. *cap.* 30. *lib.* X. *cap.* 2.

i *Corruptible crown*, a garland of leaves, &c.] It is well known, that the *crown* in the *Olympic games*, sacred to Jupiter, was of *wild-olive*; in the Pythian, sacred to Apollo, of *laurel*; in the Isthmian, or Corinthian, solemnized in honour of Palæmon, of *pine-tree*; and in the Nemæan, of *smallage*, or *parsley*. Now the most of these were *ever-greens*; yet they would soon grow dry, and break to pieces. *Elsner*, (*Observ.* Vol. II. p. 103,) produces many passages in which the contenders in these exercises are rallied by the Grecian wits, for the extraordinary pains they took for such trifling rewards; and Plato has a celebrated passage, which greatly resembles this of St. Paul; but by no means equals it in beauty and force.

k *I run not as one that is to pass undistinguished.*] Τρεχειν αδηλως, is *to run unnoticed*. But as some have explained it of "running without attending to the marks and lines which determined the path;" I have hinted at that sense. As for Heinsius's interpretation, who explains it "moving so slowly, as that he might seem to stand still," it is like many others, peculiar to that writer, quite insupportable: no one, in such a circumstance, could be said to run at all.

SECT. XVII.

to gain the approbation of my Judge, and attending with diligence and care to the boundaries which are marked out to us, I exert myself to the utmost. *I* so *fight, not as one that beats the air*[l], who fights as it were with his own shadow, or practises a feigned combat; but as one who has a real and living enemy to contend with, and who knowing that his life and his all is in question, would strike sure, and not lose his blows upon empty air. Thus I allow not myself in a habit of indolence and luxury, *but* imitate on a much nobler occasion, and to a much greater degree, the self-denial of the combatants I mentioned above; *I* bruise and *mortify my body*[m], *and bring it into* such a degree of *servitude* as the superior interests of my soul require. And this I judge a most necessary precaution; *lest after having served as a herald to others*, and after having made proclamation of the glorious rewards to be attained, and endeavoured to animate their zeal in the pursuit, *I should myself be disapproved*[n] of the great Judge, and finally declared unworthy of obtaining a share in them.

1 Cor. IX. 26.

fight I, not as one that beateth the air.

27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast away.

IMPROVE-

l *Beats the air*, &c.] In order to attain the greater agility and dexterity, it was usual for those who intended to *box* in the *games*, to exercise their arms with the *gauntlet* on, when they had no antagonist near them; and this was called σκιομαχια, in which a man would of course *beat the air*. But Bos has taken a great deal of pains in his *note* here, to shew, that it is a proverbial expression for a man's *missing his blow*, and spending it, not on his enemy, but on empty *air*.

m Bruise and *mortify my body*.] Υπωπιαζω, properly signifies to *strike on the face* as boxers did; and particularly on (the υπωπιον,) the part of it under the eyes, at which they especially aimed. Hence it comes to signify a *livid tumour* on that part; and sometimes it is proverbially used for a face terribly bruised, mortified, and disfigured, like that of a boxer just come from the combat; as *Bos* has shewn at large, *Exercit.* p. 138, &c.

n *Lest after having served as an herald, I should be disapproved.*] I thought it of importance to retain the primitive sense of these *gymnastic* expressions. It is well known to those who are at all acquainted with the *original*, that the word κηρυξας, expresses the discharging the office of an *herald;* whose business it was to proclaim the conditions of the *games*, and display the prizes, to awaken the emulation and resolution of those who were to contend in them. But the *apostle* intimates, that there was this *peculiar* circumstance attending the Christian contest, that the person who proclaimed its laws and rewards to others, was also to *engage himself;* and that there would be a peculiar infamy and misery in miscarrying in such a circumstance. Αδοκιμος, which we render *cast-away*, signifies one, who is *disapproved* by the judge of the *games*, as not having fairly deserved the *prize*. Mr. *Fleming*, arguing that St. Paul knew his own sincere piety, and consequently might be assured of his future happiness, maintains that *to be cast-away*, here signifies, being judged unworthy of a part in the first resurrection. (*Fleming's Discourse on the first Resurrect.* p. 89.) But it appears to me much more natural, to refer it to the *whole Christian* reward; as it is certain God engages his people to persevere, by awful threatnings against *apostacy*, as well as by the promises of eternal life to those who continue faithful and constant.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us learn, by the example of the *apostle*, a generous ambition of excelling in religion. Not of doing more indeed, than our duty, for we owe God our best, and our all; but *abounding in it* to the utmost, carrying our love, our zeal, and our obedience, to the highest degree we can attain, and preserving an honest readiness to know our duty, even in circumstances in which there might be some plausible excuse for overlooking it. In particular let the *ministers* of the *gospel* not think it much to their praise, to perform those services which it would be shameful and almost impossible for them to neglect; but labour to acquit themselves in the very best manner they can; shewing in the whole of their conduct, that they are not animated only, or chiefly, by *secular motives*, in the labours they bestow upon the souls of men. SECT. XVII. Ver. 16--18

They are peculiarly concerned to learn and imitate this condescension of the *apostle*, *in becoming all things to all men, if by any means he might gain some.* But they are not the only persons who are interested in this. It is the duty of every *Christian*, to endeavour *to please his neighbours* and brethren for their good; and it will be our wisdom, and happiness, upon such generous principles, to learn to govern and deny ourselves. 19--22

We are all called to engage in the most important *race*, in the most noble *combat*. The children of this world fatigue themselves for trifles, and exert the noble faculties of an immortal spirit, to purposes far beneath its dignity. But *all* is not vanity. *Every* crown is not withering and *corruptible*. We have heard of an *inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.* And whatever there was in the prospect to awaken these *Corinthians*, still remains to awaken and animate *us*. Let us therefore keep our eyes and our hearts fixed upon it, and be in good earnest in what we do; often looking to the *marks* which are drawn in the word of God; realizing to ourselves the certain existence, and formidable character, of our invisible enemies; suspecting especially ourselves, fearing the treachery of our own corruptions, and using all that *mortification* which may promote our spiritual life and usefulness. 24--26

Who would not tremble, how high soever his profession, or office may be—who would not tremble, to hear *St. Paul* insinuate a supposed *possibility, that after having preached to others*, and made such animating proclamations of the heavenly prize to them, *he might himself be rejected*, as unqualified to receive it? Let us learn from it humility and caution; learn to watch against dangers, 27

SECT. XVII.

gers, which will still surround us, as long as we dwell in this body; and rejoice in the guardianship of *Christ*, who will at length *deliver* his faithful servants *from every evil work, and preserve them to his heavenly kingdom.*

SECT. XVIII.

Farther to awaken that holy caution which the apostle had suggested in the preceding section, he here represents to the Corinthians, on the one hand, the privileges which Israel of old enjoyed, and on the other, the Divine displeasure which they brought upon themselves, by behaving in a manner so unworthy of them. 1 Cor. X. 1—13.

1 CORINTHIANS X. 1.

SECT. XVIII.

1 Cor. X. 1.

I HAVE been urging you to run your Christian race with resolution and diligence; which you should the rather do, considering how fatally many of those miscarried who were once God's peculiar people, and favoured in a very extraordinary manner. *Now* this is so affecting a thought, that I must desire you, my *brethren*, to attend, while I farther illustrate it; for *I would by no means have you ignorant*[a] of so instructive a history. You have, I doubt not, often heard, *that all our fathers*, whom Moses the great lawgiver of our nation led out of Egypt, *were* all *under the conduct* of that miraculous pillar of *cloud*, and of fire, which did their camp so singular an honour; *and* they *all passed through the sea*, the power of God opening a way for them, while the mountains inclosed them on either side, and their Egyptian enemies were
2 pressing hard upon their rear. *And* this was so wonderful and solemn an event, that I may say, they *were all baptized into Moses*, that is, initiated into the profession of that religion which he was to teach them from God, *in the cloud, and in the sea:* God did, as it were, solemnly receive them under protection, as his people;

1 COR. X. 1.

MOREOVER, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all pssed through the sea:

2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea;

a *Would by no means have you ignorant.*] Mr. Locke thinks, that when the Corinthians inquired about the lawfulness of *eating things sacrificed unto idols*, they might urge that they could not be mistaken for *heathens*, because they maintained an open profession of Christianity, holding communion with the church, by partaking of the sacraments, as well as other acts of worship; and that they might be exposed to ill-will, and ill-usage, if they did not sometimes comply with their neighbours. And he supposes the *apostle* had each of these ideas in view in what follows: it is possible he might.

SECT. XVIII.

people; and they, by following his miraculous guidance, declared their dependance upon him, and entire subjection to him. *And* as they proceeded in their journey, *they did all eat the same spiritual food*, that is, the manna, which for its excellence is called angel's food, (Psal. lxxviii. 25,) and which was indeed an emblem of the bread of life that cometh down from heaven. *And they did* also *all drink* of what might be called, on the like principles, *the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual* or mysterious *Rock* [b], the wonderful streams of *which followed them* [c] through so many of their wanderings and incampments; *and that Rock was* a most affecting representation of *Christ*, the Rock of ages, the sure foundation of his people's hopes, from whom they derive these streams of blessings, which follow them through all this wilderness of mortal life, and will end in rivers of pleasure at the right hand of God for ever.

1 Cor. X. 3.

3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat;

4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink. (For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.)

4

It was the privilege of Israel as a people, to enjoy such typical blessings as these; and *yet* it is plain, that *God had no pleasure in the greatest part of them, for they were overthrown in the wilderness*; the whole generation that came adult out of Egypt was made to die there, and they sometimes died in such multitudes, that the ground was overspread with carcases, as a field is in which a battle has been fought.

5 But with many of them God was not well pleased; for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

5

Now these things were types and *figures to us*, that we might learn wisdom at their expence, and not trust to external privileges, while we go in a course of disobedience to the Divine authority; and particularly, *that we might*

6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not

6

b *The same spiritual meat—the same spiritual drink.*] It is not necessary to understand by the same *meat* and *drink*, the same by which we christians are supported for this could not properly be said of any Israelites who were not true believers; but the meaning is, that they all, good and bad, shared the same miraculous supply of food and drink.

c *That followed them.*] It is objected, that "this stream did not constantly follow them; for then they would have had no temptation to have murmured for want of water, as we know they did at Kadesh, in the circumstances so fatal to Moses; nor would they have had any occasion to buy water of the Edomites, as they proposed to do. Deut. ii. 6." *Mr. Mede* justly answers, that perhaps the stream from the first rock at Rephidim failed, for a farther trial of their faith; and at Kadesh God renewed the like wonder; but that likewise might probably fail when they came to the inhabited country of the Edomites; which was not till near the end of their wandering. *Mede's Diatrib. in loc.* He there illustrates the similitude between Christ and this rock, in many other particulars; but those mentioned in the *paraphrase* seem the most material.—That the word *was*, imports here no more than *signified*, is extremely obvious; and instances of the like use of it every where abound in scripture.

d *To*

SECT. XVIII.

might not lust after evil things, and indulge ourselves in irregular and luxurious desires ; *as they also lusted* after quails in contempt of the manna, and thereby brought the wrath of God upon them, and were consumed with pestilential distempers, while the meat was yet between their teeth. (Psal. lxxviii. 30, 31.) Learn therefore, by what they suffered, to cultivate that temperance and self-denial which I have just been recommending to you. *Neither be ye idolaters, as some of them* [*were*] even while they yet continued at mount Sinai ; *as* you know *it is written*, (Exod. xxxii. 6, 19,) with relation to the feast of the golden calf, *The people sat down to eat and drink* of the sacrifices which were offered to it, *and* then they *rose up to play*, and dance [d] in honour of this vain symbol of deity. And this naturally leads me to add another caution, no less suitable to your present circumstances than the former ; *neither let us commit fornication* [e], or lewdness of any kind, *as some of them* in their idolatrous revels *committed* [*fornication ;*] *and* particularly when they eat the sacrifices of Baal Peor, and offended with the Midianitish women ; the sad consequence of which was, that *there fell in one day twenty three thousand* by the plague, besides those that were slain by the sword, who amounted to a thousand more. (Numb. xxv. 1—9. *Neither let us tempt Christ* by our unbelief, after the tokens he hath given us to command our faith, and engage our dependance ; *as some of* the next generation of *them also tempted* [*him* [f]] while he resided among them

1 Cor. X. 6.

7

8

9

not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.

7 Neither be ye idolaters, as *were* some of them ; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

8 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.

9 Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.

d *To play* and dance.] Dr. Whitby observes, that, though many *commentators* understand this of *fornication*, it is without sufficient reason. *Fornication* is indeed spoken of in another clause, and that the very next *verse* 8, which makes it less probable that it is intended here. As the golden *calf* was designed as a symbol of Jehovah, there is no reason to imagine they would bring such an abomination into worship, however irregular, which was addressed to him. And *Elsner*, (*Observ.* Vol. II. p. 105.) has abundantly vindicated the remark of Grotius, that παιζειν, signifies to *dance*, a ceremony with which God himself had lately been honoured, (Exod. xv. 20.) and which, it is very probable, might naturally be attended with the shouts and songs which Moses heard on approaching the camp. Exod. xxxii. 17, 18.

e *Commit fornication.*] This was common at many idolatrous feasts among the heathen ; and it was the more proper for the *apostle* to caution these christians against it, as it was proverbially called *the Corinthian practice*, κορινθιαζειν, being, as many have observed, equivalent to *scortari*. *Strabo* tells us, that in one temple of Venus at Corinth, there were no less than a thousand *priestesses*, who made prostitution a part of their devotions to the *goddess*, *Strabo. Lib.* II. *cap.* 16.

f *Tempt Christ, as some of them tempted* [*him.*] Though the word *him* be not in the *original*, it seems plainly to be implied ;

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them, as the angel of God's presence; *and were destroyed by* fiery *serpents.* (Numb. xxi. 6.) from the venom of which others were recovered by that brazen serpent which was so illustrious a type of the Messiah. *Neither murmur ye* under dispensations of Providence, which may seem at present to bear hard upon you, and are contrary to your present inclinations and interest; *as some of them also murmured* again and again, *and were destroyed by the destroyer*[g], who was commissioned by one judgment and another to take them off.

1 Cor. X. 9.

10 Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.

10

11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

But let me remind you on the whole, as I hinted above, that *all these* calamitous *things* which *happened unto them*, were intended *as* types or *examples* to us, that we might learn what we are to expect in the like case; *and they are written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the world are come*[h]; as we live under the last dispensation which God will ever give to the children of men, and with which the whole œconomy of their probation shall wind up.

11

12 Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.

Therefore let me urge this improvement of the whole survey upon you, and upon all into whose hand this epistle may come, and say, *let him that thinketh he standeth* most securely, and who may be ready most confidently to trust in his own strength, *take heed lest he fall* so much the lower, in proportion to the degree in which he imagines himself out of all manner of danger.

12

13 There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man; but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye

It is true indeed, and it is matter of great comfort and thankfulness to reflect upon it, that *no temptation has* yet *taken you, but such as is common to man*[i], and such as human reason, properly exercised on the principles of that revelation which you enjoy, may furnish you with motives to resist. *And* we have the pleasure farther to reflect, that [*God*] *is faithful who* hath promised[k] to preserve his people, and he

13

plied; and this is a considerable *text* in proof of his residence with the *church* in the wilderness, as the *angel* of God's presence. Compare Exod. xxiii. 20; Isa. lxiii. 9; Heb. xi. 26; Acts vii. 38.

g *The destroyer.*] The Jews generally interpret this of him whom they fancy to be the *angel of death*, and whom they call *Sammael.*

h *Ends of the world.*] Τελη αιωνων properly signifies the *concluding age*, or the *last dispensation* of God to mankind on earth; which, if we believe the gospel to be true, we must assuredly conclude that it is.

i *Common to man.*] Ανθρωπινος, may signify also, *proportionable to human strength* as well as frequent to human creatures; the *paraphrase* therefore imports that.

k *Faithful* who hath promised.] Compare Psal. ciii. 13, 14. and numberless passages, in which God encourages his people to hope for his presence and help in pressing danger.

SECT. XVIII.

1 Cor. X. 13.

he *will not leave you to be tempted above your ability: but will with the temptation* with which he permits you to be assaulted, *provide you also* with *a way of escape, that* if you be not wanting to yourselves, *you may be able to bear* [*it:*] yea, and may acquire new strength and honour by the combat.

ye may be able to bear it.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 6--11

MAY Christians be always sensible how happy they are in having received such useful hints from the New Testament, to assist them in the interpretation of the Old; and particularly those which are here given. We see in *Israel according to the flesh*, an affecting emblem of the church in general. We see all their external privileges, though many and great, were ineffectual for their security, when they behaved as unworthy of them.

Alas! how affecting is the thought, that some who were under the miraculous *cloud*, *who passed through the* waters of the divided sea, who eat of the bread that came down *from heaven, and drank of* that living *stream* which omnipotent mercy had opened from the flinty rock, and made it to follow them in the windings of their journey, should yet become, instead of being on the whole the objects of Divine favour and complacency, the monuments of wrath. Let us not ourselves therefore be high-minded, but fear. Let us mark the rocks on which they suffered this fatal shipwreck, if possible to keep clear of them; and pray that Divine grace may direct our course. Let us avoid not only those superstitious and idolatrous rites of worship, by which, as Protestants, we are in little danger of being ensnared; but also those *lusts of the flesh*, which must considering our superior advantage, be highly displeasing to God; even though they should not rise to a degree of equal enormity and scandal.

Let us especially take heed that we tempt not Christ, who has graciously been pleased to take us under his conduct, and to honour his church with so many demonstrative tokens of his presence. Nor let us murmur, if while we are in this wilderness state, we sometimes meet with difficulties in our way. Still let us make it familiar to our minds, that God adjusts the circumstances of every trial; even that God who stands engaged by the promises of his word, as well as the equity and goodness of his nature, *not to permit us to be tempted above what we are able to bear.* If we see not an immediate way of escape, let us calmly and attentively look around us, and humbly look up to him, that he may pluck our feet out of the net.

SECT.

SECT. XIX.

The Apostle farther pursues that caution against all approaches to idolatry, which he had been suggesting in the former section: particularly arguing from that communion which Christians had with Christ at his table, which ought to place them at the remotest distance from what might justly be called having communion with devils. 1 Cor. X. 14—22.

1 Cor. X. 14. WHEREFORE my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.

1 Corinthians X. 14.

SECT. XIX.

1 Cor. X. 14.

I HAVE just expressed my confidence in the care of God to support you under any extraordinary temptation which may hereafter arise, to draw you out of the way of your duty: *wherefore, my beloved* brethren, being assured of this, let me exhort you carefully, to *flee from* all approaches to *idolatry*, whatever circumstances of allurement, or danger, may seem to plead for some degree of compliance. *I* now *speak as unto wise men:* I use a rational argument, which will bear the strictest examination, and which I am willing should be canvassed as accurately as you please; *judge you* therefore *what I say;* for I will refer it to your own deliberate and cooler thoughts, whether there be not danger in those idolatrous participations which some of you are so ready to defend; and whether they may not naturally bring some degree of guilt upon your conscience?

15 I speak as to wise men: judge ye what I say.

15

16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

16

The sacramental *cup*, which is to us both the commemoration of past, and the pledge *of* future *blessing*, *which* in the name of the Lord *we* solemnly *bless*[a], setting it apart to a holy and religious use; *is it not the* token of our faith and our *communion* in these inestimable privileges which are the purchase *of the blood of Christ*, shed for the remission of our sins? *The bread which we break*, and which was appointed in the first institution of the ordinance for this purpose, *is it not the communion of the body of Christ* in the like sense? That is, the token of our sharing in the privileges which he procured at the expence of sufferings, by which his body was broken,

a *Which we bless.*] This *text* very plainly shews, that there is a sense in which we may be said to bless the sacramental elements. To render it, *the cup over which*, or *for which we bless God*, is doing great violence to the *original*. That is said to be *blessed* which is set apart to a sacred use, (Gen. ii. 3; Exod. xx. 11,) and on which the blessing of God is solemnly invoked.

b *Of*

SECT. XIX.

broken, and almost torn in pieces. *For we* Christians *being many, are* yet, as it were, but different parts of *one* and the same broken *bread*[b], which we distribute, [*and*] receive, in token of our being members of *one body; for we are all partakers of one* kind of holy *bread*, and one cup, which we eat, and drink together at the same table, in testimony of our mutual and inviolable friendship, cemented in Christ our great and common head.

1 Cor. X. 17.

17 For we being many, are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.

18 *Consider* how it is with *Israel according to the flesh*, the lineal descendants of those who were the chosen and peculiar people of God: *are not they who eat of the sacrifices* which have been offered in the court of their temple at Jerusalem, esteemed to be *partakers of the altar* of God, on which part of them have been consumed? And is not their eating the flesh of these victims esteemed as an act of communion with the Deity, to whom they were offered? Now you may easily perceive, that the same argument will be conclusive to prove, that they who share in the sacrifices presented to idols, knowing what they do, and especially doing it in some apartments belonging to the temples of such idols, hold a kind of communion with these fictitious and detestable deities, by no means reconcileable with the sanctity of the Christian character, or the tenor of their sacramental engagements.

18 Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices, partakers of the altar?

19 *What then do I say, that an idol* of wood or stone, of silver or gold, *is* in itself *any thing* divine? *Or* do I say, *that the thing which is sacrificed to idols is* in itself *any thing* morally and universally unclean? You well know, that I intend to maintain nothing of this kind.

19 What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing.

20 *But* on the other hand, you must be aware, *that what the heathens sacrifice, they sacrifice to* evil *demons, and not to God;* such spirits, as those to which they address their devotions, must to be sure be wicked spirits, if they exist at all;

20 But *I say*, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would

b *Of one bread.*] Many valuable *manuscripts* read it, *and of one cup.* Elsner has an admirable *note* upon this *text*, to prove, that eating together in a religious manner hath been, in almost all ancient nations, a token of mutual friendship. See Mr. *Lowman's Hebrew Ritual*, p. 54, and Maimonides, quoted by him there. See more especially, Dr. *Cudworth's Discourse* concerning the *True Notion of the Lord's Supper*, chap. i. and chap. vi. And it is certain also, as it is intimated below, that by sacrifices, and the feasts on them, they held communion with the real or supposed deity, to which they were presented; as the author of a *discourse on sacrifices* has shewn at large: but that this was the only end of *all* sacrifices, I cannot think that learned writer sufficiently to have proved.

would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.

all; and devils may well be supposed to use their utmost efforts to support such worship, it being grateful to them, in proportion to the degree in which it is affronting and injurious to the great Object of Christian adoration, and ensnaring to the souls of men. *Now I would not* by any means, *that you* who have at your baptism solemnly renounced the devil, and all his adherents, *should* in any degree *have*, or seem to have, *communion with demons* [c]. And indeed this is most inconsistent with those solemn badges of your holy profession, by which your baptismal covenant is so frequently ratified and renewed. *Ye cannot* with tolerable decency and consistency, at one time *drink of the cup of the Lord*, in that holy rite in which you commemorate his death, *and* at another time *of the cup of demons*, of libations poured out in their honour, or cups drank at their feasts. *Ye cannot* surely think, you should *be partakers of the table of the Lord*, *and* go from thence to *the table of demons*, or from theirs to his, to share alternately in such holy and polluted rites and entertainments. Yet it is certain, that by partaking in their feasts, you do, as it were, contract a kind of friendship and familiarity with these infernal spirits.

SECT. xix.

1 Cor. X. 20.

21 Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.

21

22 Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?

Do we, by such a conduct as this, deliberately mean to *provoke the Lord to jealousy* [d], by thus caressing those whom he abhors as his rivals? Must it not incense him exceedingly? and must it not, in its consequences, be detrimental, and even fatal to us? Or *are we stronger than he?* so as to be able to resist, or to endure the dreadful effects of his displeasure.

22

IMPROVE-

c *I would not that ye should have communion with demons.*] It is a monstrous notion of Olearius, that the heathens imagined the very substance and body of their deities insinuated itself into the victim offered to them, and so was united to the person eating the flesh of these sacrifices, *Elsner, (Obser.* Vol. II. p. 108,) has sufficiently confuted this his weak inference from some mistaken passages of Firmicus, and Jamblicus. But this learned and judicious critic has proved at large, from incontestible authorities, that the *demons* were considered as *present* at these sacrifices, and as taking their part with the worshippers in the common feast; by which means, as *Maimonides* expresses it, in a very remarkable passage, *(More Nevoch.* Part III. *cap.* 46,) Friendship, brotherhood, and familiarity, was contracted between them, because, "all eat at one table, and sat down at one board." The altar was called the *table of the Lord*, Mal. i. 12. Compare Deut. xxxii. 17. But then, as Dr. *Cudworth* hath shewn, we are not to conclude from hence, that under the gospel-dispensation, the *table* of the Lord is properly an *altar*; for the *Lord's supper* is not a *sacrifice*, but a *feast* upon a *sacrifice*, *Cudworth* on the *True Notion of the Lord's Supper*, chap. 5.

d *To jealousy*, &c.] Alluding to the notion of *idolatry*, as a kind of *spiritual adultery*, which moved the *jealousy of God*. Yet every deliberate sin is in effect daring his omnipotent vengeance.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. XIX.

LET us *hear and fear:* for it is the tendency of every wilful sin, *to provoke the Lord to jealousy;* it is a challenge to him, as it were, to let loose the fierceness of his wrath. And alas, how can such feeble creatures as we, endure its terrors! Let the consideration urged by the *apostle*, to deter men from *partaking in idolatrous sacrifices*, be weighed by us, as extending to every thing whereby God may be dishonoured, and *Christ* affronted.

Ver. 22

They who are *Christians* indeed, and partake of that *feast* which the blessed *Jesus* hath instituted in commemoration of his dying love, do herein *partake of the body and the blood of Christ:* Let it be remembered as a pledge of everlasting obedience, since it is a memorial of infinite obligation: it shews that we belong to him, as his willing and peculiar people, that we renounce all his rivals, particularly *Satan*, and his kingdom, and whatever favours and supports his accursed cause. Let us be faithful to our allegiance, and have no more to do with any of these abominations.

21

17, &c

Let us also remember this as a pledge of everlasting *peace and love; we are all one bread, and one body.* Let us not envy and provoke, grieve and revile one another; but study mutual comfort and edification. And when little jealousies arise, and our secular interests seem to interfere, which may often be the case; let us open our minds to those exalted sentiments which our common relation to *Christ* tends to inspire; and let the sweet remembrance of the *communion* we have had with him, and each other, in that holy ordinance, blot out of our minds the memory of every difference which might tend to promote disgust and alienation.

SECT. XX.

The Apostle gives more particular directions as to the cases and circumstances in which things sacrificed to idols might, or might not lawfully be eaten; and urges farther considerations, to engage them willingly to resign their own gratification in some instances, for the glory of God, and the good of their brethren, 1 Cor. X. 23, *to the end.* Chap. XI. 1.

1 CORINTHIANS X. 23.

1 Cor. X. 23. ALL things are lawful for me, but all things

SECT. XX.

I HAVE said a great deal, to guard you against all approaches to idolatry. In answer to this,

1 Cor. X. 23.

I know, it may be replied, that there are certain things which may accidentally lead to it, and

custom, neither the churches of God.

tom, for women to appear with their head uncovered; *neither* do I know of its prevailing in any of *the* other *churches of God* [d], whether planted by me, or any of my brethren. I think therefore that it ought to be avoided, as a singularity which may appear like affectation, and give offence, even if it be not judged a natural indecorum. And thus I leave the affair to your consideration; and promise myself, you will give me no farther cause of complaint on this head.

SECT. XXI.

1 Cor. XI. 16.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET Christians frequently remember the honourable relation in which they stand to *Christ as their Head*; and as beyond all dispute, he is, under his mediatorial character, most willingly and joyfully subject to God, let us learn to imitate him in that cheerful and entire subjection, out of love and reverence to him, guarding against whatever is unbecoming, lest he be dishonoured thereby. Ver 3 4

By the passage before us, we see the force of *custom* for determining, in many respects, what is *decent*, and what is otherwise. Let us maintain a proper regard to this; lest even *our good* should *be*, through our imprudence, *evil spoken of*, and all our infirmities magnified into crimes. Let us often recollect the original dignity of our nature, by which we are the *image and glory of God*: that, so far as by sin and folly this honour is lost, we may endeavour to regain it; and where it is not, may think and act more suitably to so high a relation. 14, 16

When in any act of Divine worship, we have the honour to approach the blessed God, let us reverence his awful presence, and even that of his holy *angels*, who attend the assemblies of the saints. We pray, that *the will of God may be done upon earth, as it is done in heaven*: let us be careful to worship God in such a manner, that these celestial spirits, who ever appear before him with sacred awe, may not be offended at the rudeness and folly of sinful mortals; whom they may well wonder to see admitted, in their best estate, to this Divine privilege which they have forfeited by repeated provocations. 10

As

d *Nor any of the* other *churches.*] *Mons.* Amyrant understands it in this sense, "The churches do not use to contend with me, but to submit to my decisions;" but the former clause, *we have no such custom*, will not admit this. The argument on the other interpretation is clear and strong.

SECT. XXI.

As for what St. Paul observes of the mutual dependence which the sexes have on each other, let it dispose them to mutual candour and respect; avoiding the cruel tyranny, or the vain affectation, which often arms them, on either side, with ungenerous reflections. And as *all things are of God*, let it be our concern, that all things be *to him*, that all things be faithfully employed for his glory; and whatever comforts we receive in relative life, which are indeed many and important, let us adore the wisdom of the Divine constitution in the original formation of our nature, and the secret influence and conduct of his Providence, in the regulation of our respective circumstances and affairs.

Ver. 11,12

SECT. XXII.

The apostle, in order to reform several scandalous abuses of the Lord's supper, which had crept into the church of Corinth, leads back their views to the original institution of the solemn ordinance and infers from thence the danger of profaning it. 1 Cor. XI. 17, *to the end.*

1 CORINTHIANS XI. 17.

SECT. XXII.

1 Cor. XI. 17.

THUS you have my free sentiments of the manner in which women, even when most singularly honoured by God, should appear in your religious assemblies. *But while I am giving* [*you*] *these instructions, I do not*, and cannot *praise* [*you*,] as I would, on several accounts; and particularly on this, *that* when *you come together* in these assemblies, and on the most solemn occasions, there are such irregularities, and sometimes such indecencies among you, that your meeting is *not for the better, but for the worse*, as you lose more in religion one way than you gain another. *For*, before I mention any other instance of this, I must observe in the *first* place, that *when ye come together in the church*[a], though it is so evident, that nothing but reverence to God, and love to each other, should reign on such occasions; *I hear that there are schisms*, or uncharitable, and angry divisions and disputes *among, you, and I* do, *in some respect*, and with regard to some of you, *believe it*: *For* in the course of things, it is to be expected,

1 Cor. XI. 17. NOW in this that I declare *unto you*, I praise *you* not, that you come together not for the better, but for the worse.

18 For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you, and I partly believe it.

19 For there must be also

a *Come together in the church.*] Some have urged this as an instance in which *church* signifies a *building* for public worship: and have urged also the 22d *verse* in the same view; but both may be interpreted of the assembly, as the *paraphrase* shews.

b *There*

also heresies among you, that they which are approved, may be made manifest among you.

pected, that *there must be even heresies among you* [b]: contentions will arise to such a height, that separations will ensue. The warmth of some tempers evidently leads to this; and Providence may probably permit it, *that they who are* of the most *approved* characters, *may be made manifest among you*, by the steadiness and candour of their conduct. SECT. XXII. 1 Cor. XI. 19.

20 When ye come together therefore into one place, *this* is not to eat the Lord's supper.

It is particularly grievous to me, to be forced to complain of your irregular behaviour, while celebrating that most excellent and endearing ordinance of the eucharist: but I am compelled to do it; and *therefore* I tell you plainly, that *when you come together* in such a manner, as you do, *into one place*, under pretence of attending this grand solemnity; *it is not eating the Lord's supper* [c]: it does not deserve to be called by that name. 20

21 For in eating every one taketh before *other* his own supper; and one is hungry, and another is drunken.

Instead of regarding it in a holy and religious view, you confound it with a common meal; and do not indeed behave in the manner that decency would require if it were no more than a common meal: *for* though you sit down at what, even in that case, ought to be a social and friendly table, yet each has his particular mess, and without offering a share of it, in an obliging manner to the rest, *every one in eating* greedily *taketh before* [*the other*] *his own supper* [d], both the food and liquor which he hath 21

b *There must be even heresies*] It seems evident from hence, that *heresy* is spoken of as something worse than the *schism* mentioned above; but whether it be an evil entirely of a different kind, or only of a higher degree, is not so clear from this passage. I think, for reasons not here to be enumerated, that the word αιρεσις signifies, *a sect of people separated from others* and forming what we call a distinct *denomination*; whereas there may be *schism without separation*, if people assembling together have uncharitable contentions with each other; which was the case of these *schismatical Corinthians*.

c *It is not eating the Lord's-supper.*] The Corinthians seem to have been guilty of two great faults in the matter here referred to, which St. Paul, in the following discourse, labours to reform:—The *one*, that they confounded the *Lord's supper* with the common meals they made together; (from whence the *love-feasts* were afterwards derived;) thinking it sufficient, (as the *Quakers* now do,) if they mingled some thoughts of Christ's death, with this common use of bread and wine:—The *other*, that they used such a rapacious behaviour at these *feats*, and treated one another so rudely and unkindly, as on their own principles would have been very indecent. This latter circumstance is finely illustrated in a passage from *Xenophon. Memor. lib.* 3, *cap.* xiv. § 1.) in which he observes, that *Socrates* was much offended with the Athenians for their conduct at their common suppers, as some prepared delicately for themselves, while others were but slenderly provided for. That worthy man endeavoured to shame them out of this low taste, by offering his provisions to all the company. *Mr. Grove* hath with great propriety mentioned a passage from *Socrates the ecclesiastical historian, (lib.* v. *cap.* 22.) in which he speaks of some Egyptians living near Alexandria, who partook of the *sacrament* in a very peculiar manner, (as it seems much after the Corinthian fashion,) introducing it with a jovial feast, in which they regaled themselves with all kinds of food. *See Grove on the Sacrament*, p. 108.

d *His own supper.*] This monstrous and to us unaccountable circumstance, is cleared

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hath provided ; *and so* while *one* poor brother, for want of suitable provisions, *is hungry, another* eats and *drinks to excess*[e]; which would in all circumstances be a scandal to a Christian, and especially to a religious assembly, as this certainly ought to be.

1 Cor. XI. 21.

22 *What* a reproach is this to your common profession ? Give me leave to ask you, *have you not houses to eat and to drink in* on common occasions, that you must come to the place of public worship, thus to entertain yourselves there, which is certainly in all views very ill-judged ? *Or do you despise the church of God*, which you must greatly offend by such a conduct as this ? *and* at the same time *shame those that have not* provisions and accommodations of their own, and might hope at your common meals to be relieved ? *What shall I say to you*, on this occasion ? *Shall I praise you in this* [*respect ?*] I wish I could fairly and honourably do it ; but at present, *I praise*, [*you*] *not ;* I must rather blame you, and exhort you to amend what is so grossly amiss.

22 What, have ye not houses to eat and to drink in ? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not ? what shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this ? I praise *you* not.

23 And that my admonitions and exhortations may come with the greater weight, let me lead back your thoughts to the original institution of this profaned and affronted ordinance ; which if you reflect upon, I am sure you must be heartily grieved at the indignities you have offered it, and will be engaged to resolve, you will never repeat them. Now I am able to speak of this matter with great certainty and exactness : *for* my knowledge of it did not depend upon any human tradition whatsoever ; but *I received* by special revelation *from the Lord*[f] Jesus Christ himself,

23 For I have received of the Lord, that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the *same* night

cleared up by what is said above of the *social suppers* used among the Greeks ; to which each brought his own provisions, which were not always made so common to the whole company as decency and friendship might have required.

e *Drinks to excess.*] The word μεθύει has this signification in a great latitude ; but one would hope, that though the Jews and heathens were often intoxicated in their religious *festivals*, these Christians, imprudent and irregular as they were, did not carry their excesses so far ; and therefore I chose to soften the *version*. Compare Vol. VI. p. 1, 134 note k.

f *I received* by especial revelation, &c.] This *epistle* seems to have been written before any of the *Gospels ;* and it seems to be intimated, Gal. i. 17, &c. that when he wrote it, he had seen none of the *apostles*. It is very remarkable, that the institution of this ordinance should make a part of that immediate revelation with which Christ honoured him ; and it affords a strong argument for the *perpetuity* of it in the church. For had others of the *apostles*, (as *Barclay* presumes to insinuate,) mistaken what passed at the last *passover*, and founded the observation of the *eucharist* on that mistake, surely Christ would rather have corrected this error in his *new revelation* to St. Paul, than have administered such an occasion of confirming Christians in it. For some notes which might have been inserted here, see Vol. VII. sect. 172.

night in which he was betrayed, took bread:

himself, *that which I also delivered to you*, in my former preaching on this subject, in which, as in all things else, I have been careful most exactly to adhere to my original instructions. And you know the substance of it was this, *That the Lord Jesus Christ, the* very [*same*] *night in which he was betrayed*, and amidst all those serious thoughts which his own nearly approaching sufferings must suggest, after he had finished the paschal supper, *took bread*, some of the remainder of those unleavened cakes with which that solemn feast is celebrated; *And having* in a most reverent manner, *given thanks* to God, the great Author of all temporal and spiritual blessings, and looked up to him for his blessing upon it, for the purposes to which it was going to be appropriated, *he brake* [*it*] into several pieces, *and* distributing it to his disciples who were present, *said*, *Take* this bread, and *eat* it with due reverence and regard; for *this is* the solemn representation of *my body which is* just going to be *broken*, by the most bitter pains and agonies, *for you* and your salvation; *this* therefore *do in* all the succeeding ages of my church, as a *commemoration of me*[g]; that the memory of my painful death may be kept up in the world, and your hearts, and those of all my faithful followers, be properly affected with the review of it. *In like manner also* [*he took*] *the cup*: which, you well remember, was *after he had supped*; so that it was by no means a part of that meal they had been making, but something quite distinct from it: and he likewise distributed that to them as he had done the bread; *saying*, *This cup is the* solemn seal and memorial of the *new covenant*, which is established *in my blood*, by which all its invaluable blessings are derived to you. *This* likewise *do, as often as ye drink* [*it*] *in commemoration of me*, and in order to maintain the memory of my bleeding dying love in the church and the world. *You therefore*[h], *as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup*[i], *do*

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1 Cor. XI. 23.

24 And when he had given thanks, he brake *it*, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

24

25 After the same manner also *he took* the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of me.

25

26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink

26

g *This do*, &c.] Because the word ποιειν signifies, in some few instances, *to sacrifice*, Dr. Bret would render it, *sacrifice this*: whence he infers, that the *eucharist* is a *sacrifice*. And a learned prelate in the council of Trent, pleaded, with much the like judgment, that when Christ uttered these words before the *cup*, he ordained them *priests*; whereas he gave them the *bread* as *laicks*. See *Father Paul's Hist. of the Council of Trent*, p. 510.

h *Therefore, as often as ye eat*, &c.] It is plain, that γαρ, must here have the force of an *illative* particle; as it also has, Luke xx. 38.

i *Eat this bread*, &c.] It is no wonder, a *text*

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do indeed perform a very solemn and important action; for, according to his own interpretation and institution, you *shew forth*, and as it were
1 Cor. XI. 26. proclaim, *the Lord's death* in its most affecting circumstances; which the church must throughout all ages continue to do, *until he come*[k] to close the present scene of things, and to receive all his faithful servants to a place, where, for ever dwelling with him, they will no more need
27 these memorials of an absent Saviour. *So that* you see, by a farther consequence, *whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink*[l] [*this*] *cup of the Lord unworthily*, that is, in an irreverent manner, without a due regard to him, and to the great original purpose of its appointment, *shall be* counted *guilty of* profaning, and affronting in some measure, that which is intended to represent *the body and blood of the Lord*; and consequently the affront does evidently rebound to our Lord himself, who was pleased with infinite condescension, for our sakes, to assume human flesh, and to suffer in it.

drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death, till he come.

27 Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink *this* cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

28 Let none *therefore* come to the ordinance in a rash and irreverent manner; but *let a man examine himself* as to his knowledge of its intent, and his desire to comply with its great design; *and so let him eat of the* sacramental *bread, and*
29 *drink of the cup* which is used with it. *For he that eateth and drinketh in an* irreverent, profane, and *unworthy manner*[m], must certainly dis-

28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of *that* bread, and drink of *that* cup.

29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damna-

a *text* in which this element is so plainly called *bread* after *consecration*, should be urged against the Popish doctrine of *transubstantiation*. And it signifies little for them to plead, that the scripture sometimes calls things changed, by the name of the thing out of which they were made, (as *Adam* is called *dust*, Gen. iii. 19; *Aaron's* serpent, a *rod*, Exod. vii. 12;) or calls them according to their sensible appearance, (Josh. v. 13; Mark xvi. 5;) for these instances rather turn against them, by proving, that where the literal interpretation is evidently absurd, we must have recourse to the figurative.

k *Until he come.*] Nothing can be more unreasonable, than to refer this, (as the Quakers do,) to the time when *Christ* should come, by his *spiritual illumination* on their minds, to take them off from carnal ordinances; for, not to insist upon it, that we have at least as much need of the *Lord's supper* as the primitive *Christians* had, (not having so many advantages as they, to keep up the memory of *Christ* in our minds, to quicken us to holiness, and to unite us in love,) it is evident, the grand coming of Christ by the Spirit was, when it is poured out on the day of *pentecost*; an event, which had happened many years before the date of this *epistle*.

l *Eat, or drink.*] So it is in the *original*, η πινη; nor could our *translators* surely be under any temptation to render it, *eat and drink*, to elude the argument drawn from hence for *communion* in one kind only; since, as that excellent French preacher, Mons. *Superville* observes, (*Serm.* Vol. IV. p. 245,) it might as well prove, that the *cup* may be received without the *bread*, as the *bread* without the *cup*. So that it is surprising assurance in a late *Popish* writer, to plead from hence, that *communion* in one kind only was the practice of the Corinthian church. See *Mod. Controv.* p. 100.

m *In an unworthy manner.*] To receive to

damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

displease and provoke God; so that it may truly be said, that he *eateth and drinketh judgment to himself*[n]: he takes the readiest way to bring down the judgments of God upon him, *not distinguishing the Lord's body*, nor making that proper difference which he ought to make between that and common food. SECT. XVII. 1 Cor. IX. 29.

30 For this cause many *are* weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

And accordingly many of you have actually brought such judgments upon yourselves; and I must plainly tell you, it is *upon this account*, and to manifest the Divine displeasure against you for such shameful irregularities, that God hath sent distempers among you, so that *many of you* [*are*] now *weak and sick, and some* considerable numbers of your society *are fallen asleep* in death. Survivors therefore ought to lay the matter seriously to heart, and set about an immediate reformation. 30

31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

For if we would judge ourselves[o] with a due severity and impartiality, *we should not* surely *be* so severely *judged*, and animadverted upon by God. 31

32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

But when we are thus *judged*, it is not in a displeasure wholly inexorable, but with kind designs of paternal goodness; and *we are corrected of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the* impenitent *world*, and consigned over to final and everlasting destruction. 32

33 Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another.

Therefore, my brethren, in one word, *when ye come together to eat* in those feasts which frequently precede the administration of this ordinance among you, *wait* decently and respectfully *one for another*, till the whole assembly be convened. 33

34 And if any man hunger, let him eat at home;

And if any one be so *hungry*, that he cannot conveniently stay till that time, *let him* 34

to purposes of faction, or intemperance, was receiving very unworthily; but the sense of that *phrase* must extend to *every* manner of receiving contrary to the nature and design of the ordinance; and consequently, to the case of doing it merely in a *secular* view; which I heartily pray that all concerned in it may seriously consider.

n *Judgment to himself.*] I think it the most unhappy mistake in all our *version* of the *Bible*, that the word κριμα, is here rendered *damnation*. It has raised a dread in tender minds, which has greatly obstructed the comfort and edification they might have received from this ordinance. The *apostle* afterwards says, *we are judged*, (that is, as he afterwards explains it, *we are corrected,*) *that we may not be condemned;* which plainly shews, the judgments spoken of might be fatherly chastisements. This sin, as sin, does indeed expose us to condemnation, should God be extreme to mark it, as an irreverent behaviour under *any other* ordinance does; but it is *superstition* to set this at so vast a distance from all the rest, as many do.

o *Judge ourselves.*] Διακρινων, ver. 29, signifies *to distinguish*; here, διακρινομεν signifies, *examining that we may distinguish*, and judge of our own character and fitness for the *sacrament*. Mr. Locke justly observes, that he is little attentive to St. Paul's writings, who has not observed, that he often repeats a word he had used before, though in a sense something different from the preceding.

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1 Cor. XI. 34.

him eat at his own house[p]; or at least take a kind of antepast, that may prevent any inconvenience arising from a little necessary delay; that you may *not come together to* your *condemnation*, and in such a manner, as to provoke the judgment of God against you. It may suffice to have said thus much, for the present, on this subject; *and what remains* farther to be adjusted, *I will regulate when I come* to Corinth; which if Providence answer my hopes, and succeed my schemes, will be in a little time,

home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.

IMPROVEMENT.

WHAT just matter of thankfulness to our blessed *Redeemer*, does that account of the institution of the *sacred supper* afford us, which *St. Paul* assures us *he received* immediately *from him.* Let us often reflect *it was in that very night in which he was betrayed*, that his thoughts so compassionately wrought for our comfort and happiness; when it might have been imagined, that his mind would be entirely possessed with his personal concerns, with the doleful scene of his approaching sufferings. We learn from this account, the *perpetuity*, as well as the great leading design, of the ordinance. *We shew forth the Lord's death*, and *we shew it forth till he come.* If we do indeed desire to preserve the memory of *Christ's* dying love in the world, if we desire to maintain it in our own souls, let us attend this blessed institution; endeavouring by the lively exercise of faith and love, to *discern*, and in a spiritual sense, to feed upon, *the Lord's body.* Nor let any humble and upright soul be discouraged, by these threatenings of *judgment*, to the profane sinners who offered such gross affronts to this holy solemnity; affronts, which none of us are in any danger of repeating. These scandalous excesses, when they pretended to be worshipping *God* on this great occasion, might justly provoke the eyes of his holiness, might awaken the arm of his indignation. Yet even these sinners *were chastised, that they might not be* finally and for ever *condemned.*

Let not any then be terrified, as if every soul that approached the ordinance without due preparation, must by necessary consequence, *seal its own damnation.* Thus to attend the table of the Lord is indeed a sin; but, blessed be God, not a sin too great to be forgiven. Let those therefore, who, though they feel in their heart

[p] *Let him eat at his own house.*] Mr. *Amyrant* and Mr. *Cradock*, (*Apost. Hist.* p. 174,) understand this, as a prohibition of *love-feasts*; but I think it evident from *antiquity*, they were retained in the church long after; though dubious whether they prevailed so soon.

hearts a reverential love to *Christ*, yet have hitherto refrained from attending this feast of love, be engaged to come; to come with due preparation, and *self examination*, as to their repentance and faith, their love and obedience; *then may they, with* the most hearty welcome from the great Lord of the feast, *eat of this bread, and drink of this cup;* receiving it as the *memorial* of *Christ's body broken*, and of *his blood shed for the remission of our sins.* Through that blood alone, let us seek this invaluable blessing, without which indeed, nothing can be a solid and lasting blessing to us: and let us, on every occasion, treat our brethren with a tenderness and respect becoming those who have considered ourselves and them, as redeemed by that precious blood, and indebted to it for the hopes of everlasting salvation. SECT. XXII. Ver. 28, 24

In a word, let us never rest in the external rites or exercises of worship, how decently and regularly soever performed; but look to our inward temper, and to the conduct of our minds, if we desire to maintain their peace, and that our *coming together* should *be for the better, and not for the worse.* 17

SECT. XXIII.

The Apostle comes to treat on spiritual gifts; and introduces what he had farther to say concerning them, by observing, that various as they are, they all proceed from the same sacred Agent, and are intended for the edification of the same body, in which all Christians are united. 1 Cor. XII. 1—13.

1 Cor. XII. 1.

NOW concerning spiritual *gifts*, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

1 Corinthians XII. 1.

IT is *now* time I should proceed to speak something *concerning* those *spiritual* [*gifts*] with which God hath been pleased so abundantly to bless you, my Corinthian *brethren;* and as to the right use and improvement of which, *I would not* by any means *have you ignorant.* SECT. XXIII. 1 Cor. XII. 1.

2 Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb

Upon this head *you* in the general *know, that* during your natural state, before the cheering rays of the gospel broke in upon you, *ye were heathens*, without any knowledge of the true God, and *carried* by a blind implicit credulity *after dumb idols;* which were so far from being able to bestow on their votaries any supernatural endowments, by which they might be enabled to speak extraordinary truths, or in languages before unknown, that they were themselves destitute of the common powers of speech, or any capacity of perception and action. Yet you 2

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were blindly enslaved to the worship of such stupid forms, degrading as it evidently is to the rational nature of man; [*just*] *as you were led* by the artifice of your priests, who found their account in your delusions. And I hope therefore, you will always remember, that the unmerited goodness of God in bestowing such gifts on persons who could pretend so little claim to them, lays you under a lasting obligation to use them in the most dutiful and grateful manner,

1 Cor. XII. 2. dumb idols, even as ye were led.

3 And *therefore*[a] I hope you will not allow yourselves to despise any of your brethren, on account of their deficiency in them: since there is an important sense in which they may all be said to have been enriched by Divine and supernatural influences. For *I give you to know*, and desire you to admit and retain it, as a principle equally certain and weighty; *that*, as *no one, speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed*[b]; *and* consequently all pretences made to the Divine Spirit by the Jews are notoriously false and detestable; so, on the other hand, *no one can* sincerely *say*, [*that*] *Jesus* [*is the*] *Lord*[c]: none can embrace his religion, and support the profession of it in truth, *but by* the powerful operation of *the Holy Ghost* on his heart; and therefore, as you are all in a sense spiritual, it would

3 Wherefore, I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed: and *that* no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

a *Therefore.*] The force of this *particle* διο, seems to be this; I am careful to give you the following hints concerning *spiritual gifts*, because in proportion to the degree in which God hath magnified his grace in calling you from *idolatry* to such extraordinary privileges and endowments, I am solicitous you may be preserved from abusing them, and engaged to improve them in the wisest and most faithful manner.

b *Calleth Jesus accursed.*] *Mr. Nathaniel Taylor, (on Deism,* p. 60, 61,) thinks this refers in general to the *test* put on Christians, by their *persecutors*, that they should not only deny, but *blaspheme Christ.* This the Gentiles indeed required, (see *Plin. Epist.* x. 97. *Euseb. Eccles. Hist.* iv. 15.) But I rather think this refers to the Jews, who while they uttered blasphemies against Christ themselves, (1 Tim. i. 13,) and extorted them, if possible, from those they apprehended to be his disciples, (Acts xxvi. 11,) pretended to the *gifts* of the *Spirit*, by which they undertook to cast out *devils*; and perhaps they might imitate some of the exorcisms which Christians under the operation of the *Spirit* performed. Such a caution might therefore be very useful. (Compare 1 John iv. 1—3, which seems nearly parallel to this passage.) Dr. *Owen* pertinently observes, that the Jews sometimes call Jesus ישו, instead of ישוע; concealing their *blasphemy* under the three *initial letters* of the words, ונבדו ימוח שמו, which signify, *let his name and memory be blotted out*; which is equivalent to *Anathema*, or *let him be accursed. Owen on the Spir.* p. 3.

c Sincerely *say*, [*that*] *Jesus* [*is the*] *Lord.*] Chrysostom well observes, this phrase of *saying, that Jesus is the Messiah*, must be supposed to proceed from *true faith* in him; and the expression is used to import a man's being a *true Christian*, because such strong temptations lay against professing Christ under this character, that they who maintained this doctrine were in heart real believers; though there might be a few excepted instances. This seems as plain a proof as could be desired, that *true faith* is the work of the *Spirit* of God upon the heart. See *The third Letter to the Author of Christianity not founded on Argument*, p. 34—36.

d *Diversities*

would be highly unreasonable, that the greatest should despise the least, on account of any distinction which may have been made in his favour; especially, when you consider who is the great Source of all. *Now there are diversities of gifts* in different persons, *but* there is one and *the same* Divine *Spirit*, from whom they are all derived; *And* though *there are diversities of administrations*[d], there is one *and the same* common *Lord*, who appoints his ministers under their distinct offices, and gives them their powers, their ability, and their success. *And* though *there are diversities of operations* and effects produced, *yet it is* one and *the same God who worketh all* these effects *in all* the persons concerned; and they can pretend to nothing more than being the subjects, or at most, the instruments of his almighty and universal agency.

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1 Cor. XII. 3.

4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.

6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

But to every one of his believing servants, who are thus honoured, *is given*, according to his wise and holy distribution, *a manifestation of the Spirit:* (for that our portion of gifts may properly be called:) and this in such a degree, *as is most* agreeable and *profitable* for the interest of the whole; that all may harmoniously carry on the great design of glorifying God, in the edification and happiness of the whole body. *For to one*, for instance, who is placed in the highest rank of the Christian church, *is given by the Spirit, the word of wisdom;* a comprehensive view of that grand scheme in which the wisdom of God is so wonderfully displayed, that even angelic intelligences are continually admiring it: *to another, by the same Spirit*, such lower degrees of it, as may be called *the word of knowledge*[e]; whether respecting the meaning

7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

8 For to one is given by the Spirit, the word of wisdom: to another, the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

d *Diversities of administrations.*] Calling them *administrations*, or *services*, (διακονιων,) was a gentle manner of reminding them of the great design of these *gifts*; and so of reproving those who perverted them to contrary purposes.

e *Word of wisdom—and of knowledge.*] There are, perhaps, few *texts* in the New Testament more difficult than some in this *chapter*, and in the xivth of this *epistle*, relating to the extraordinary *gifts* then in the church; which were at that time so well known, as not to need explication; and it is a noble instance of the genuine simplicity and modesty of the *apostle*, that he did not expatiate on so grand a subject with any unnecessary parade. I think the late *Lord Barrington*, and after him Dr. *Benson*, have made it highly probable, that the *word of wisdom* was that extensive plan of *Christianity* which was revealed to the *apostles* by the *Holy Spirit*. See *Barring. Misc. Sacr. Essay* i. p. 39—41. *Bens. Propa. of Christianity*, Vol. I. p. 40—46. But that the *word of knowledge* was, as they, after Dr. Whitby, assert,

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meaning of the Old Testament, or other things in the Christian plan, which may render them superior to most of their brethren; though inferior to the class I mentioned above. *To another* is given such an extraordinary *faith*[f], *by the same Spirit*, that he can commit himself to the Divine protection in the midst of the extremest dangers; and is thereby qualified courageously to assert the truth of the gospel, in the very face of its most violent persecutors: *to another, the gifts of healing, by the same Spirit*, in consequence of which, while under its operation, he can by a word, or a touch, remove the most inveterate diseases. *To another, the working of miracles*[g] of a different kind, such as taking up serpents, drinking any deadly draught unhurt, and especially the ejection of demons: *to another* the gift of *prophecy*; whereby he shall be able exactly to foretel some contingent future event; *to another, the discerning of spirits*, so as authoritatively to determine by what impulse any one speaks, who pretends to inspiration; or to be capable of pronouncing on the sincerity of men's professions, or their fitness for any public work to be assigned to them; *to another*, the gift of speaking with *various kinds of tongues*, which he had never had the natural means of acquiring: and *to another*, the no less useful, though less splendid endowment, which we distinguish from the former, by calling it *the interpretation*

1 Cor. XII. 9.

9 To another, faith, by the same Spirit; to another, the gifts of healing, by the same Spirit;

10 To another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, discerning of spirits; to another, *divers*

assert, (*Misc. Sacr. ibid.* p. 42—45, and *Bens. ibid.* p. 46—48,) an extraordinary ability to understand and explain the *Old Testament*, and especially its *prophecies*, I do not think equally apparent. Perhaps it might be a lower degree of the *word of wisdom*. See *Mr. Chandler on Joel*, p. 133—137. In confirmation of which opinion, it may be observed, that when *wisdom* and *knowledge*, (חכמה and דעת,) are mentioned together, *wisdom* is generally put first, as most excellent. Compare Eccles. i. 16; chap. ii. 26; Isa. xxviii. 6; chap. xlvii. 10; Col. ii. 3. And it is well known, that the *highest* orders of *teachers* in Israel were called anciently, חכמים, *wise men*. See Deut. i. 13; chap. xvi. 19; 1 Cor. i. 20. Mr. Saurin explains *knowledge* of a *discerning of mysteries*; such as the appearance of Christ to change the *saints* found alive, the re-establishment of the Jews, the man of *sin*, the *beast*, &c. *Saur. Serm.* Vol. VI. p. 18.

f *Faith.*] *Faith*, as an extraordinary gift, in this connection, must in the general signify, "a firm persuasion of being called out by God, at any particular time, to perform some miracle, and accordingly going about it without any suspicion or fear, in confident dependence on a correspondent Divine interposition.

g *Working of miracles.*] It is difficult to distinguish this from *faith*, as explained above. Some understand it of some very *extraordinary* miracles, such as taking up *serpents*, drinking any deadly draught *unhurt*, curing diseases by a *shadow* passing over the patient, &c. Compare Mark xvi. 18; Acts v. 15. But I rather think, with Mons. *Amyraut*, (in his excellent *Paraphrase,*) that ενεργηματα δυναμεων, may refer to the *dispossession of demons*, or *delivering persons over to them*. This *gift*, and that of *healing*, might be comprehended in *faith*; but perhaps in some instances, it might work only in the one, or the other of these effects.

h To

divers kinds of tongues; to another, the interpretation of tongues.

pretation of tongues[h]; in consequence of which a person shall be able to understand, and render into a known language, that which is spoken by a foreigner, in a tongue, with which neither he himself nor the other hearers have been acquainted. *But the one and the same* almighty *Spirit worketh all these* diversities of gifts, *dividing unto every one severally as he thinketh fit*[i]: his wisdom fixes the scheme, what this variety should be; and his sovereign pleasure determines, why they should be imparted to such and such particular persons, rather than to others. The variety, I say, is wisely appointed; *for as the body is one, and* yet *hath many members, but all the members of that one body, many as they are, constitute one body*, united in one well regulated system; *so also* [*is*] *Christ*, that is, the whole society of which Christ is the Head; and for the whole of which he may, as it were, be put, being indeed all and in all. *For by*, and according to the operation of *one Spirit*, *we* Christians *are all baptized into one body, whether* we be originally *Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or freemen;* the religion we before professed, whether true or false, the rank which we now hold in life, whether high or low, makes no difference as to the grand point; our union with the body is the same; and the same happy consequences follow from that union. *And* this in particular, that *we are all made to drink into one Spirit*[k]; as we drink of the same sacramental cup, so we do by our communion with Christ, whose blood is represented by it, all imbibe the influences of the same Spirit, by which the Divine life was at first produced, and is continually preserved. I say, we have all imbibed it; as the whole body may be said to imbibe the wine, which enters in at the mouth, and descends to the stomach; yet it is not intended *for* the benefit of those members alone, but of the whole; so in like manner, *the body is not one member, but many;* yet so

SECT. XXIII.

1 Cor. XII. 10.

11 But all these worketh that, one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

11

12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also *is* Christ.

12

13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

13

14 For the body is not one member, but many.

14

h *To another*, the gifts of *tongues—to another, the interpretation of tongues.*] For the farther illustration of these clauses, and the interpretation here given, see the notes on chap. xiv. 28.

i *As he thinketh fit.*] Βουλεται does not so much express arbitrary pleasure, as a determination founded on *wise* council.

k *Drink into one Spirit.*] Mr. Locke thinks St. Paul refers to the sacramental *cup*, rather than the bread here, because the wine is more spirituous, and in a lively manner represents the animating effects of Christ's blood, and the *Spirit* communicated by it.

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so united, that the Spirit, imparted to one, is designed, whether in its miraculous operations, or sanctifying influences, for the benefit of the whole.

1 Cor. XII. 14.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 2, 3

Let us thankfully acknowledge the Divine goodness, that we have not been led on after the example of our Pagan ancestors, to the vain worship of dumb and stupid idols; but have been taught from our infancy, to adore the living Jehovah. May we, in the most solemn and consistent manner, say, *That Jesus is the Lord!* And while our actions speak our regard to him as such, may it appear, that our hearts are under the influences of the Spirit of God, by which alone men are brought to that Divine temper.

4, &c.

Let us often reflect upon those glorious attestations which were given to the truth of our holy religion, by that *diversity of gifts and operations* with which its first teachers were furnished and adorned. Let us thankfully receive their testimony, and thereby *set to our seal, that God is true.* And let a view to that great design, in which all these wonderful things centre, engage us to study more a union of heart, with all who *in every place call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.* In him Greeks and Barbarians, bond and free, are united. His glory therefore let all unanimously seek; and while his name is blasphemed by the ignorant and malignant, who cannot bear the purity of that religion which he teaches, may it so be defended by us, as at the same time to be exemplified and adorned.

SECT. XXIV.

The apostle, farther to inforce that humility in the use of their spiritual gifts, and that mutual affection which the Corinthians so much needed to be farther taught, goes on, in prosecution of the allegory used above, to represent christians as so united in one body as to have entirely the same interest; and insists on a tender care of the least member, from its subservience to the good of the whole. 1 Cor. XII. 15, *to the end.*

1 CORINTHIANS XII. 15.

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IT is of the highest importance, in your present circumstances, for the honour of God and your comfort and edification, in the use of the gifts with which God hath endowed you, that I should farther illustrate and enforce the observation

1 Cor. XII. 15.

1 Cor. XII. 15.

IF the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the

the body: is it therefore not of the body?

observation I have just been making, that the body is not one member, but made up of the conjunction of many, which have various offices and purposes. None can therefore complain of its own situation, as if it were insignificant; nor should any despise another, as unworthy of regard. As to the first of these, *if the foot should say, Because I am not the hand,* but am placed in the lowest order, rest upon the ground, and am often covered with dirt, therefore *I am not of the body; is it* indeed *for this, not* any part *of the body;* or would it have reason to represent itself, as, on this account, an out-cast? SECT. XXIV. 1 Cor. XII. 15.

16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

16 *And if the ear should say, Because I am not* so visible, so beautiful, so useful as *the eye,* therefore *I am not of the body, is it* indeed, *for this* reason *not of the body?* Is it not a very important and useful part? Yea, is not the body far more perfect, in consequence of the foot, and the ear, being what they respectively are, than it would be, if each of them were another hand, or another eye? For *if the whole body* [*were*] as it were, *an eye*[a]; and a man could look at will, through every pore; *where* [*were*] *the hearing,* that important sense, which admits so much pleasing entertainment and improvement? And *if the whole* [*were*] *hearing, where* [*were*] *the smelling,* a sense which though less important than the former, is not destitute of its proper delight and its proper use? *But now* we see, that *God,* the great and wise Creator, *hath placed the* various *members, every one of them in the body, as he hath seen fit;* and his inimitable contrivance, and overflowing goodness; is glorified in their variety, and in their arrangement. *But if* they *all were one member,* or the members all of one form and use, *where* [*were*] *the body?* How could it possibly subsist? What a monstrous thing would such a detached member be, if it could be supposed to exist alone? Or if each member were to be transformed into that which might in itself seem most noble, how ruinous to the whole would such a transformation be? *But now,* as [*there are*] *many members,* there is in the union of them all, *but one* harmonious regular *body,* furnished for

17 If the whole body *were* an eye, where *were* the hearing? if the whole *were* hearing where *were* the smelling.

18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

19 And if they were all one member, where *were* the body?

20 But now *are they* many members, yet but one body.

a *If the whole body* [*were*] *an eye,* &c.] The *apostle* by this intends probably to insinuate, that, were there no other gifts in the church but those which they so much extolled in some of their *teachers,* it would be a very great disadvantage to the body.

b *Appear*

SECT. XXIV.

for the various animal functions, and capable of a variety of sensations and actions. *And* no one of them ought to despise any of the rest; for *the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee;* since by the hand the body is maintained and fed, and the eye itself preserved and defended. *And again, the head,* elevated as it is, and so admirably furnished with all the nerves and organs planted in it, [*cannot say*] *to the* most distant and extreme parts, even the *feet,* mean as their form and office seems, *I have no need of you;* since by means of them, the head, and all the other parts of the body, are supported, and removed from place to place.

1 Cor. XII. 21.

21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

22 *But* it may farther be observed here, agreeably to the point which I have now in view, that *the members of the body, which appear to be weaker*[b] than the rest, and perhaps are most delicate and tender in their structure, *are more abundantly necessary;* so that without them the animal functions can by no means be discharged.

22 Nay much more, those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary.

23 *And* so likewise with respect to *those which seem to be the more* ignoble and *dishonourable* [*parts*[c]] *of the body, those we surround with more abundant honour*[d] *and* those which seem *our uncomely* [*parts*] *have,* by virtue of the dress we put upon them, *more abundant comeliness* than most

24 of the rest. *For our comely* and graceful [*parts*] *have no need* of being so adorned, as they appear to greater advantage uncovered; *but God hath* so *attempered* the several parts of *the body together,* as *to give* a *more abundant honour to that which is* so formed, as rather to appear *deficient;* for by making the meanest part thus necessary, he hath entitled it to the care of

25 the noblest: *That* so *there might be no schism in the body,* no division of separate interests; *but* [*that*] all *the members might have the same care*

23 And those *members* of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour and our uncomely *parts* have more abundant comeliness.

24 For our comely *parts* have no need but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that *part* which lacked;

25 That there should be no schism in the body; but *that* the members

of

b *Appear to be weaker.*] Some think this refers to the *brains* and *bowels,* which are very tender, and liable to many disorders. Others understand it, of the least *muscular parts,* or *veins, arteries,* and other minute channels in the body; the least obstruction in which would be fatal. If *more feeble,* be put for *less noble;* it suggests a very obvious and important sense, relating to the *channels* by which nature has provided for throwing off the dregs; which dishonourable as they may seem, are so necessary, that if they be obstructed, intense torment and inevitable death must ensue.

c *Our dishonourable parts,* &c.] It seems as if he had said, *the face,* on which the image of God is particularly stamped, we leave uncovered; but as for those parts, which decency, or custom teaches us to conceal, we contrive not only to cover, but also as far as we conveniently can, to *adorn* by covering.

d *We surround with more abundant honour:* τοῖς τιμην περισσοτεραν περιτιθεμεν.] Our *version* by no means expresses the force of the Greek idiom here.

e *If*

members should have the same care one for another.

26 And whether one member suffer; all the members suffer with it: or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

of each other, as being each an important part of the whole. *So that if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it*[e], and are concerned to remove the complaint; *or if one member be honoured* and adorned, *all the members rejoice with it*: the ornament of one part being looked upon as that of the whole. SECT. XXIV. 1 Cor. XII. 26.

Now to apply this to the purpose for which I introduced it: *you are* all *the body of Christ, and members* [*each*] *in particular*. *And as God hath placed some* members in more eminent stations in the body; so also some Christians *in the church*. He hath placed in the *first* rank, *apostles;* who are honoured with an office of the highest distinction, and furnished with endowments peculiar to themselves. *In the second place*, are ranked *prophets;* whose business it is to foretel future events, or to speak by immediate inspiration, for the edification of the church. *In the third, teachers*, of a more ordinary kind, *afterwards*, those who are endowed, upon some particular occasion, with [*miraculous*] *powers; then the gifts of healing* diseases by anointing the sick with oil, and praying for their recovery. Besides these, he has endowed some with such extraordinary activity and sagacity, as may fit them to be *helpers* in the management of charities; others are qualified by their prudence to be *governments*[f], by whose advice, the affairs of societies may be steered and conducted in the safest and happiest manner; there are also wonderful operations, by which men are taught [*different*] *kind of tongues*, which they had never learned by any human methods. 27 28 29

29 *Are* all apostles? *are* all prophets? *are* all

Now as the offices of the church are different, the gifts by which men are fitted to discharge them, are proportionably so. [*Are*] *all* the members

e *If one member suffer*, &c.] Bos, in his *Exercitations* on this *text*, has collected many parallel passages from Seneca, and other heathen writers.

f *Helpers—governments*, &c.] I think, we can only guess at the meaning of these words; not having principles on which to proceed in fixing them absolutely. I have inserted what seemed to me most probable in the *paraphrase*. The Author of *Miscellanea Sacra* thinks, much light is to be derived, by comparing *verses* 8—10, with *verses* 28—38, the order in one *text* corresponding with that of the other; but the order of the same words differing in the two places demonstrates the contrary. I have met with no remark here, which seems more pertinent than that of Mons. *Amyrant*; who thinks, that the same persons might possess *many* of these gifts, and sustain *several* of these characters, which were not stated distinct offices; and might be called *helpers*, in reference to their great dexterity and readiness to help those in distress; and *governments*, in regard to that genius for business, sagacity in judging the circumstances of affairs, and natural authority in the councils and resolutions of societies, which rendered them fit to preside on such occasions.

g *Are*

SECT. XXIV.

members or ministers of the church, *apostles*[g]? Yea, [*are*] *all*, who are subordinate to them, *prophets*? Or, [*are all* that sort of inferior *teachers*, whom I observed to stand in the third class? [*Have*] *all* those [*miraculous*] *powers*, which I have again and again mentioned? Or, to instance only in one of the lowest of them, *have all the gifts of healing* diseases, in that extraordinary manner in which some have effected it? Yea, *do all speak with tongues* which they have never learned? Or *do all* others find themselves able to act in that lower sphere I spoke of before, and to *interpret* into their native language, or any other, what has been uttered in a tongue to them generally unknown? These things are well worthy your consideration: *but* instead of attending to them, *ye contend earnestly about the best* or most shining *gifts*[h]; envying, *and* it may be, detracting from the superior endowments of others. *Yet I shew you a way of the highest excellence*, to which it will be your greatest wisdom carefully to attend.

1 Cor. XII. 29.

all teachers? *are* all workers of miracles?

30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?

31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 18 THE wisdom and goodness of God, as displayed in the *formation* of the human body, is a subject that well deserves our attentive reflection, and humble acknowledgment. All its several parts are useful to the whole; and the most *noble* cannot upbraid the *meanest* as an incumbrance. Each has reason to rejoice in its own situation, as well as in the addition of all the rest; and were the lowest placed higher than it is, it would become useless, burdensome, and monstrous.

20

Let us acknowledge the same hand in the wise *subordination*, appointed in civil societies, and in the church of *Christ*. Let none be discouraged at the *low* station wherein they are fixed, but rather let all acquiesce in the prudent and gracious disposal of the

g *Are all apostles?* &c.] It appears that this invidious temper was not extirpated from among the Corinthians, even by this just and lively *expostulation*; for *Clemens Romanus*, writing to them many years after, complains of its continued prevalence, as leading them to neglect a due regard *to those presbyters, who were according to Divine direction fixed among them, and to throw them out of their episcopal office.* See *Clem. Epistle to the Cor. Sect.* 44.

h *Ye contend earnestly about the best gifts,* &c.] I doubt not but this is the just rendering of ζηλοῦτε τὰ χαρισματα τὰ κρείττονα: for it seems quite contradictory to suppose, that after the *apostle* had been shewing them, that these *gifts* were not at their own option, and that they ought not to emulate the *gifts* of each other, nor to aspire to superiority; he should in effect unsay all again, and give them such contrary advice,

the supreme Lord, and apply themselves to their proper functions. Let *each member* consider all the rest with pleasure; and rejoice with thankfulness, in the health and vigour of the other parts, making the proper use of them, and communicating in return its proper services. If any be *weak*, let all strengthen it. If there be any blemish and imperfection in any part, let all the rest tenderly *cover it*; unless when a regard to the health and happiness of the whole, requires that it should be laid open, and searched in order to its being cured. And upon the whole, so far as we can prevent it, let there be *no schism in the body*. Alas, that there should be so many breaches and contentions! Let us lament them; let each in his place endeavour to heal them; and unite in a sympathizing care of one another. So shall we best express our regard to our common *Head*; so shall we, in the remotest consequences, best consult our own interest and honour. SECT. XXIV. 23 25

Blessed be God, that he hath, in his church, given not only *apostles*, and *prophets*, but also *pastors* and *teachers!* Adored be that bounty with which he hath scattered down his gifts, whether ordinary or extraordinary, on the children of men. Let all be used, not to the purposes of ostentation, but of edification. And let us be desirous of those whereby we may bear most of the image of *Christ*, and may most promote the great design for which he visited this low world of ours, and was pleased to unite his *church* unto himself, and its several members to each other, in such dear and indissoluble bonds. 28

SECT. XXV.

To engage the Corinthians to cultivate charity, as more excellent and important than any of those gifts about which they were so ready to contend, the Apostle gives a most lovely description of it; which he concludes with a reflection on its perpetual duration in which it exceeds even the graces of faith and hope. 1 Cor. XIII. *throughout.*

1 Cor. XIII. 1. THOUGH I speak with the tongues of

1 CORINTHIANS XIII. 1.

I HAVE been urging you to pursue something more excellent than any of those gifts about which some among you have been so ready to contend; and I have recommended it as a more excellent way. That of which I speak, is the incomparable and Divine grace of LOVE; which indeed is not only of the highest excellence, but of absolute necessity. For *if I* were SECT. XXV. 1 Cor. XIII. 1.

SECT. XXV.

1 Cor. XIII. 1.

to *speak with* all *the* variety of *tongues*[a] which are used among all the nations *of men, and* were capable of employing them even with the eloquence of *angels*, and knew their celestial dialect; *but have not love*[b] to God and my fellow-creatures, be my strains of discourse ever so harmonious, or ever so sublime, *I am become* but *sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal*[c], at best but like an instrument of music, and hardly worthy to be compared to an instrument of the nobler kind. So little delight would any of my most pompous performances give to God, or to any of his most valuable creatures, who should know that love was wanting, that I might as well think to recommend myself to acceptance, by the noisy clank made by brazen instruments,

of men, and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

2 in the worship of Isis or Cybele. *And if*, besides those gifts of tongues and eloquence, *I have* that of *prophesying*, so as to foretel the most distant and important future events; *and know all* these *mysteries* which have hitherto been concealed from the most penetrating *and* illuminated eyes; or have *all* the exactest *knowledge* of religion, or any other object that can be supposed the subject of my inquiries; *and if*, joined with this, *I have all* the most miraculous *faith*[d], by virtue of which I should be able to produce effects that might amaze the whole world, *so as to remove mountains* from their basis, to transport them from one part of the earth to another, and to change the whole face of nature with a word; *but* with all these wonderous endowments, *have not love*, simple as that principle is, and comparatively mean as it may be esteemed, yet for want of it, *I am nothing*[e] in the

2 And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have no charity, I am nothing.

a *Speak with the tongues*, &c.] Dr. Whitby shews, by a great many admirable quotations, both from Josephus and the *Jewish rabbies*, how much each of these things was regarded by the Jews, which St. Paul here speaks of as absolutely of no avail without *charity*.

b *Have not love.*] Αγαπη is not so properly rendered *charity*. It must here be taken in the noblest sense, for such a *love* to the *whole* church, and the *whole* world, as arises from principles of true *piety*, and ultimately centers in *God*.

c *Tinkling cymbal.*] Mr. *Locke* very justly remarks, that as a *cymbal* was made of two pieces of hollow brass, which being struck together made a tinkling, with very little variety of sound; St. Paul chose to instance in this, rather than in a *harp* or *flute*, or any other more harmonious instrument of music. See *Commentar. de Cymbalis, at the end of Fortuita Sacra.*

d Most miraculous *faith.*] As it is here supposed that this *faith* might in fact be separated from *love*; it cannot signify the same, as in the *epistle* to the Romans; where it is such an assent to a Divine declaration as produces a suitable temper and conduct.

e *I am nothing.*] A person so eminently favoured by God, as this description supposes, yet destitute of true piety and benevolence, must be very contemptible, and justly odious.

f *Is*

the sight of God, and have in reality no true worth and excellence. *And* I may farther add, that no external act of charity, or of zeal, will signify any thing, if this inward principle, which should be the life of all, be wanting; for *if I distribute all my goods in alms* for the sustenance of the poor, *and deliver up my body to be burnt* in defence of religion itself, and do it from a secret design of human applause, and ostentation of charity, or of piety; *but have not* in the sight of God that *love* to which I make so high a pretence, *I shall receive no advantage by it;* but in the day of final account, my Judge, instead of applauding and rewarding me as a saint and a martyr, will condemn me as a wicked and vain-glorious hypocrite. SECT. XXV.

1 Cor. XIII. 3.

3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

Indeed the properties of this love which I am now recommending, are such, that one would imagine the description of them should be enough to charm the whole world to pursue it. Sufficiently must that shew how happy it renders the soul, which is under its influence, as well as how amiable such must be both to God and man. For *love suffereth long* injuries [*and*] provocations, without being transported into rage, or instigated into revenge. On the contrary, under all this ill-usage it *is* gentle and *kind*. *Love envieth not* the advantages which others enjoy; but rather takes pleasure in them, and by friendly participation makes them its own. *Love is not insolent* and over-bearing[f], does not act with such precipitancy and rashness as pride and ill-nature often hurry men into; but engages us with tenderness to look round on those about us, lest we should by any means harm them before we are aware. Love *is not* presently *puffed up* with arrogant self-conceit, on account of any distinguished station, or peculiar endowment, which a man may possess; nor outwardly boasteth of these things, or inwardly overvalueth itself upon them. Love *doth not behave indecently*[g], in

4 Charity suffereth long, *and* is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

5 Doth not behave itself

f *Is not insolent, &c.*] The *Greek* word περπερεύεται, from whence the *verb* here used is derived, signifies *rash and inconsiderate*, so that the word must here import, "one that acts with such precipitancy and inconsideration as pride and ill-nature often hurry people into," which charity would preserve them from, and induce that tenderness and caution which engages us to look about us, that we may do ourselves, and others, no harm.

g *Does not behave indecently.*] I cannot read this passage without thinking of the venerable Mr. Hale's story of the lancet concealed in a sponge, in order to open an imposthumated part without giving any alarm to the patient who dreaded the operation. There is great reason to believe,

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in a manner unbecoming a person's station, age or circumstances. Love *seeketh not her own things,* but makes all reasonable concessions in any point of self-interest, where any superior interest of others is concerned. Love *is not exasperated,* and thrown into bitter and implacable resentments, even where the usage it meets with is most apparently unjust; and where the intention is dubious, it *imputeth not evil;* but puts the kindest construction upon the action itself, or the principle from whence it proceeds, which the nature of circumstances may by any means allow. Love *rejoiceth not at iniquity;* it takes no pleasure to see an adversary fall into a crime by which his reputation should be blasted, and his interest ruined; *but* on the contrary, it *rejoiceth with others in the truth,* and is pleased, when its greatest enemies behave themselves in a manner agreeable to the word of God, and the reason of things. Far from delighting to blaze abroad the faults of others, it *covereth all things* that are amiss, so far as it can lawfully conceal them; all, which benevolence to the public, or kindness to an individual does not require them to make known. It is not apt to suspect the integrity and veracity of others; but rather, knowing itself to be sincere, *believeth all things,* so far as with the most candid allowances it rationally can; and where it is constrained to confess, that many things are wrong, it is unwilling to treat the worst of mankind as utterly incorrigible; but *hopeth all things,* and with that hope supports itself in every kind effort it can make for their recovery; and as it is long-suffering with regard to human provocations, so from the hand of God it *endureth all things,* even the most sharp and heavy afflictions, acquiescing in his will, trusting in his care, and rejoicing, if its own sufferings may be a means of consolation and edification to others.

1 Cor. XIII. 5. itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil,

6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

8 And farther to recommend this excellent principle of *love,* give me leave to observe, that it is a grace which *never faileth;* but will accompany and adorn us to all eternity, and indeed makes a very essential part of our preparation for the heavenly world; in which it hath an apparent

8 Charity never faileth:

lieve, that in all this description, the *apostle* had in his mind that contrast to this beautiful character which was so prevalent among the Corinthians, as is evident from many passages in both these *epistles.*

h *Knowledge*

eth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall fail; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away.

rent advantage over many of those gifts which some are so ready to emulate and pursue, to the neglect and injury of love. *But whether* men admire *prophecies*, it is fit *they* should know they *shall be abolished*, when the faith of God's people shall no longer need to be encouraged, nor their devotion to be assisted, by such exhortations and instructions as are necessary now: *or whether* they boast themselves of the variety of *tongues, they shall cease* in those celestial regions: one speech and one language shall prevail among all the blessed inhabitants, *and* the languages of earth be forgotten, as too low and imperfect. Yea I may add, that a great deal of that *knowledge*, which we now pursue with the greatest eagerness, and which is very conducive to our present usefulness among mankind, *shall* then *be abolished*[h] and superseded, as referring to things altogether antiquated and passed away; or swallowed up in discoveries so much clearer, stronger and more important, that it shall appear, in comparison of them, as nothing. *For* now *we know* but *in part, and we prophesy* but *in part;* there is a great deal of obvious imperfection, attending all our knowledge, and all the services we can here perform for God and for his church: *But when that which is perfect is come*, as in the heavenly state it shall, then *that* [*which is*] only *in part, shall be abolished:* all these slow and unsatisfactory methods of obtaining knowledge, and all the little stock we have here laid up, shall be exchanged for the most extensive views of whatever it can be desirable to know, opening upon the mind in the most easy, clear, and delightful manner.

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1 Cor. XIII. 8.

9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

9

10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

10

It shall indeed be like a state of adult age, when compared with that of feeble infancy. Just as *when I was a child, I spake as a child* would naturally do, a few imperfect words, hardly at first articulate and intelligible, and often in themselves unmeaning; *I was affected as a child*, thrown into transports of joy or grief on trifling occasions,

11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child,

11

h *Knowledge shall be abolished.*] This cannot refer to all kind of knowledge; for the noblest shall be much improved. Some think it here signifies, that of *Old Testament mysteries*, which will be superseded in that world where *scripture* shall be of no farther use; and hence some have farther argued for that interpretation of the *word of knowledge* which was spoken of above. (chap. xii. 8.) But the explication given in the *paraphrase*, seems more natural and unexceptionable. To trace the gradual openings of the Christian scheme, through the various dispensations of God to the church, may be an important part of the celestial happiness.

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occasions, which manly reason soon taught me to despise; *I reasoned as a child,* in a weak, inconclusive, and sometimes ridiculous manner. *But when* my faculties ripened, and *I became a man, I put away the things of the child,* and felt sentiments, and engaged in pursuits, correspondent to such advancements of age and reason. Such shall be the improvements of the heavenly state, in comparison with those which the most eminent Christian can attain here. *For we now see* the most noble objects of our intellectual view, *in an ambiguous* and obscure *manner, as* we discern distant objects *by means of a* glass or *mirror*[i], which reflects only their imperfect forms, so that, (as when riddles are proposed to us,) our understandings are often confounded with the uncertain and indeterminate appearances of things. *But then* we shall see, not the faint reflection, but the objects themselves, *face to face*, in as distinct a manner as we could wish. *Now I know* [*but*] *in part,* and though the light of an immediate revelation from heaven has been imparted to me in many instances, and in an extraordinary manner, I am sensible how great a part is still kept under the veil. *But then* it shall be taken off, and *I shall know, even as also I am known,* in an intuitive and comprehensive manner; so that my knowledge shall bear some fair resemblance to that of the Divine Being, which, while our notices of things hover about their surface, penetrates to the very center of every object, and sees through my soul, and all things, as at one single glance.

1 Cor. XIII. 11. child, I thought as a child but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

12 For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know, even as also I am known.

13 And thus upon the whole it appears, and I hope you will remember and consider it; that *there now abide these three* most excellent graces, *faith, hope, and love;* each of them far to be preferred to the most shining gifts about which you can contend. *But the greatest of these* graces [*is*] *love;* which most directly transforms us into the image of God, and which shall continue to exert all its influence, when faith is superseded by sight, and hope by enjoyment.

13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these *is* charity.

IMPROVE-

i *By means of a mirror.*] This is the exact rendering of δι' εσοπτρου. It is well known, that the use of *dioptric* glasses in *telescopes*, did not prevail till many ages after the *date* of this *epistle*. And the *Seventy* use this word for the women's *looking-glasses*, or *mirrors* of metal, out of which Moses made the *laver*. Exod. xxxviii. 8.

IMPROVEMENT.

SURELY after having attentively surveyed the beautiful description which the *apostle* gives us of this Divine grace, *love*, it cannot be necessary that its cause should be farther pleaded. It speaks for itself; speaks to our very hearts. But O, who that enters into the description, must not mourn, that its angelic form is so much a stranger to multitudes who bear the Christian name! So that in many instances it can hardly pass uncensured; while those extremes which most evidently violate it, are often consecrated under honourable names, and men build much of their hopes of heaven, on breathing what is indeed the temper of hell. How many that stile themselves Christians, can *endure no provocations*, can *cover no faults* of their brethren, *can keep themselves within no bounds*, can *believe nothing* to their advantage, against whom, on party-principles, they have entertained prejudices! They vaunt themselves, they are puffed up with the conceit of their own wisdom, *they behave unseemly. they seek only their own* reputation and profit, they *believe the worst* they can hear of others, and suspect more than they hear; they envy those whose endowments and stations are superior to their own, and instead of labouring themselves to excel, they affect by calumny and slander to bring down their brethren to their own level, or rather, as far as possible, below it. Alas, that the dictates of our Divine Master, and the genius of our religion, are so little understood, are no more regarded! and that we so entirely forget the precepts of Christianity, as not to remember even those of common humanity. SECT. XXV. Ver. 4, &c.

Yet surely, if these precepts are wholly forgotten, it is in vain that we remember, or contend for any of its doctrines and principles. As *all languages and gifts*, *so all knowledge and faith*, is *vain*, if it be separate from love, by which true faith always operates.

Let us cultivate love more and more; and so much the rather, as it is a plant of the *celestial paradise*; which will there for ever flourish, *when tongues shall cease*, and that knowledge, on which men value themselves highly, shall utterly vanish. The *ripeness of adult age*, and the knowledge of the most improved sciences, human or divine, is but as the trifling of *an infant*, when compared with that manly and perfect state after which we are aspiring. The *dim mirror* of faith shall then be laid aside; and the truth of the objects, now so imperfectly discerned, shall in full lustre be presented to our eye, purged from every film, and strengthened for a brightness which would now overwhelm it. 1, 3 8—10 11 12

SECT. XXV. In the mean time, attending humbly to the narrow limits, and necessary obscurity, of our *present knowledge*, let us not be
Ver. puffed up in ourselves, let us not despise others; but by a modest
12 estimate, and a faithful improvement, of such degreees of light as God shall be pleased to afford us, let us press on towards the regions of eternal day; *where in his light we shall see light*, and where amidst the fullest communications of his love, we shall for ever love him, and each other, with ardours which the best hearts in their best moments on earth, can neither attain nor conceive.

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The apostle cautions the Corinthians against that vain ostentation of the gift of tongues, which was so prevalent among them: and reasons with them concerning the absurdity of the manner in which that gift was abused by some of them. 1 Cor. XIV. 1—19.

1 CORINTHIANS XIV. 1.

1 Cor. XIV. 1. FOLLOW after charity, and desire spiritual *gifts*, but rather that ye may prophesy.

SECT. XXVI. I HAVE exhorted, and I would still exhort you, my brethren, *to pursue love*[a], to cultivate
1 Cor. XIV. 1. it to the utmost of your power, in your own breasts, and in all around you, not grudging any labour, necessary to promote so excellent a cause. Yet I would not lead you to slight any inferior endowments, by which the edification of the church may be promoted. I permit you therefore, zealously to *desire spiritual* [*gifts*] so far as submission to God, the great Dispenser of them, and love to your brethren may admit. *But* I would *especially* urge you to desire and pray *that ye may* be enabled to *prophesy*, in that sense of the word in which we commonly use it, to express the gift whereby we are enabled to explain scripture, and publicly to discourse of Divine things, in an instructive and edifying manner; for by this you may hope to do the greatest
2 good. *For he that speaketh in a tongue*[b], unknown

2 For he that speaketh

a *Pursue love.*] The word διωκετε, properly signify, to pursue with an eagerness like that with which hunters follow their game." And it may be intended to intimate, how *hard* it is to obtain and preserve such a truly benevolent spirit, in the main series of life; considering on the one hand, how many provocations we are like to meet with, and on the other, the force of self-love, which will in so many instances be ready to break in upon it.

b *He that speaketh in a tongue* unknown, &c.] Dr. Whitby thinks, that the gifts of languages and prophecy were always to be found in the same person; but that the first was permanent, the other transient. Yet it seems to me very conceivable, either might be without the other. The miraculous instamping, as it were, on a man's mind a new language would indeed enable him to speak all he knew in it; but his fitness to discourse in public, as well as

eth in an *unknown* tongue, speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth *him*; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.

unknown to the auditory to whom he addresses himself, *speaks* in effect *not to men, but to God*; *for no one* else present *understands* [*him*;] and as God alone knows, the truth and importance of what he says, so it is all lost on the audience, *though in the spirit he speak* the most sublime *mysteries*. SECT. XXVI. 1 Cor. XIV. 2.

3 But he that prophesieth, speaketh unto men to edification and exhortation and comfort.

Whereas he that prophesieth, in the sense in which I now use the word, that is, discourses of Divine things in a known language, *speaketh to men*, and affords them *edification, and exhortation and comfort*, according to the particular tenor and contents of what he says. 3

4 He that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue, edifieth himself: but he that prophesieth, edifieth the church.

And thus, on the most favourable concessions that can be made, *he that speaketh with a tongue, edifies himself*[c] only, if peradventure his own good affections may be awakened by the truth he fervently delivers; and the consciousness of that miraculous power which he feels working in him, may farther establish his faith in christianity; *but he that prophesies*, while he has a share of this advantage, *edifies the church* also, by taking those methods which are most likely to promote the number of its converts, and to do good to those who are already gathered into it. 4

5 I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater *is* he that prophesieth, than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church

For my own part, far from envying any of your gifts, *I wish* them increased, and *indeed that ye all spake with tongues*, in as great a variety as I myself can, or as God hath imparted the gift to any man living: *but* on the whole, I had much *rather, that ye might* all *prophesy; for* when we come to consider the different effects and tendencies of these different gifts, we must own that, with respect to the prospects of usefulness, by which these things are much to be estimated, *he that prophesieth* [*is*] *greater than he who speaketh with tongues*[d], which the auditory 5

as his capacity of predicting future events, were matters quite of another nature.

c *Edifieth himself.*] After all that is said in the *paraphrase*, to prove that this might be possible, it was much more probable, that a man might be hurt, than edified, by the exercise of this gift, when attended with such ostentatious circumstances. But the *apostle*, according to that happy address for which he was so remarkable, makes his supposition most honourable and favourable to the person reproved; as Hector ascribes the retreat of Paris from the battle, to resentment against the Trojans, rather than to cowardice. *Hom. Iliad. lib.* vi. verse 326; and *Eustath. in loc.*

d *He that prophesieth*, &c.] How happily does the *apostle* teach us to estimate the value of gifts and talents, not by their brilliancy, but *usefulnes*. *Speaking with tongues*, was indeed very serviceable for spreading the *gospel* abroad; but for those who staid at home, it was much more desirable to be able to discourse well on useful subjects in their own language; which might serve more for the improvement of the society they belonged to, and the conviction of such of their unbelieving neighbours

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tory cannot understand, *except he interpret* what he says, *that the church may receive edification:* and even then, his speaking with an unintelligible tongue is but an unnecessary incumbrance which it would be much more modest and prudent to omit.

church may receive edifying.

1 Cor. XIV. 5.

6 *Now*, as perhaps you will apprehend this better by an example, suppose it were your own case, *brethren: if I came to you*, the next time I make you a visit at Corinth, *speaking* to you *with* a variety of unknown *tongues, what shall I profit you*, who are supposed not to understand me, *unless I speak* not merely in your hearing but *to you*, that is, in a language with which you are acquainted? Else all is absolutely lost, whatever my message may be, *whether* I speak *by* the *revelation* of some gospel-doctrine and mystery, *or* by *knowledge* [e] in the explication of some controverted text in the Old Testament, *or* by *prophesy* in the prediction of some future event, *or* by *doctrine* for the regulation of life and manners.

6 Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?

7 *So also inanimate things which give a sound, whether* it be *pipe or harp*, or any other instrument of music, *unless they give a due distinction*, in the variety *of sounds* proceeding from them, *how can it be known what is piped or harped?* How should dancers be directed by music, unless the proper tone and modulation be duly maintained? *Moreover*, in war, *if the trumpet give an uncertain sound*, so that there is an undistinguishable mixture of various kinds of notes *who should prepare himself to battle?* Could soldiers know, when to advance, or when to retreat, unless the trumpet's sound be adjusted and constantly adhered to? *So likewise*, in your religious assemblies, *unless ye utter by the tongue significant words*, to which the ear of your auditory are accustomed, *how shall it be known what you speak? For ye shall* be in that case, as those that *speak to the air*, or make a mere inarticulate noise; and I leave you to judge, how absurd it would be, to bring such unmeaning sounds into the worship of God, as ye would not endure in the common affairs of life. *There*

7 And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped?

8 For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?

9 So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air.

neighbours, as might out of curiosity happen to step into their assemblies. Compare verse 23—25.

e *Revelation or knowledge*, &c.] I am not certain, how far different ideas are to be affixed to *each* of these words; or supposing that, how far these are the appropriate ideas intended by each; but I could think of no more proper explication; and must number this among the many *texts* which I dare not pretend fully to understand.

f *Understanding*,

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1 Cor. XIV. 10.

10 There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them *is* without signification.

There may be ever so many sorts of language in the world, perhaps as many as there are persons in your most numerous assemblies; *and none of them* is *without* its proper *signification* among those that use it; there are great numbers that inhabit the same region, who perfectly understand it. *Yet unless I know the* proper *force* and import *of the* particular *language* which is used in my hearing, no one can converse with me; and I shall in vain ask an explication in my own; for *I shall be to him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh* [*shall be*] *a barbarian to me;* and if the language be ever so copious, harmonious, expressive and polite, I shall hardly be able to distinguish it from that of the most unpolished savage. *So* that on the whole, I must urge it upon *you also*, that *seeing ye desire spiritual* [*gifts,*] and are ready to vie with each other in the excellence of them, ye *seek to abound* [*in them*] *for the edification of the church*, and not merely for your own honour, according to those rules of honour which you may too rashly lay down to yourselves.

11 Therefore, if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian; and he that speaketh *shall be* a barbarian unto me.

11

12 Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spritual *gifts*, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.

12

13 Wherefore, let him that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue, pray that he may interpret.

Therefore let him that speaketh in a tongue generally unknown to the congregation to which he would address himself, *pray that he may* be able rather to *interpret* the discourse of another, than to amuse, or indeed, amaze and weary the audience by the ostentatious exercise of the gift he has already received, and with which he is fond of making a vain parade. *For if I pray in a* strange and unknown *tongue*, without making use of any explication, *my spirit* indeed *prays*, and I may have true devotion of heart towards God, as I understand the language myself; *but my understanding is* in this respect *unfruitful* as to others[f], and I perform an action void of that prudence and good sense which ought always to govern in my addresses to God, and act so childish and foolish a part, that the reason of a man may seem at that time to have deserted

13

14 For if I pray in an *unknown* tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.

14

[f] *Understanding, unfruitful* to others.] This I think a more natural interpretation, than that which supposes the *apostle* to suggest a thought, which the Papists urge to palliate the absurdity of *prayers in an unknown tongue*, namely, "there may be some general good affections working, where the person praying does not particularly understand what he says." But this would make it almost impossible to conceive, how the *gift of tongues* could be abused, if the person exercising it was under such an extraordinary impulse of the spirit, as to utter sensible words, which he did not himself understand; in which case, a man must be, in the most extraordinary sense that can be conceived, the *mere Organ* of the *Holy Ghost* himself.

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deserted me. *What then is* [*my duty*] in these circumstances? Truly it is plain enough; it requires me to say, *I will pray with the spirit*, exercising the faculties of my own soul in devotion; *but I will pray with the understanding also*[g]. *I will sing* the praises of God *with the spirit; but I will sing* them *with understanding also*, and will take great care to mingle no foolish trifling action, unworthy the dignity of a rational creature, with my prayers or songs of praise. And it becomes you especially to consider this, who are so proud of your own wisdom, and yet in some respects act so foolish a part.

1 Cor. XIV. 15. 15 What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

16 *Moreover*, whoever thou art, who actest in this ostentatious manner, consider a little, for the farther illustration of this argument, the situation of one of thine own hearers. *If thou givest thanks*, for instance, *in the spirit*, in the manner that we now suppose it to be done, that is, in an unknown tongue, *how shall he that filleth up a private place*, and should join with thee in thy devotion, *say Amen to thy thanksgiving, seeing he knows not what thou sayest?* You know it is customary for the audience to pronounce their amen: now it seems a very absurd, not to say, hazardous thing, for people to testify in such a public and solemn manner their consent to, and concurrence with, they know not what. *For* we will grant, that *thou indeed givest thanks well*, and that there is nothing improper either in the sentiments or expressions, if they were understood; *nevertheless, the other is not* at all *edified*, or improved; in order to which it is absolutely necessary, that he should know what is said.

16 Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned, say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?

17 For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified.

18 For my own part, *I thank my God*, and desire to mention it entirely to the glory of that blessed Being from whom all my gifts and talents are derived, *that I speak with tongues more than you all*, even the whole society taken together, and am distinguished from my other brethren in this endowment, in proportion to the more extensive commission which I have received to bring a variety of nations to the knowledge

18 I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than you all;

g *Pray with understanding.*] Mr. Locke and most other *commentators*, seem here to have lost the sense and high spirit of the *apostle* in this clause, when they explain τῳ νοι, as if it merely signified *a manner intelligible to others.* I apprehend, it is designed farther to intimate, what a want of *manly* sense and *right* understanding it must betray, to talk in a language the hearers could not take in, how sublime soever the discourse might be. This the 20th verse, and especially the use of τελειοι there, strongly suggests.

19 Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that *by my voice* I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an *unknown* tongue.

ledge of the gospel, and persuade them to embrace it. *But in a* Christian *church*, when assembled with them for the purposes of public devotion, *I had rather speak five* plain *words with my understanding*, in a rational manner, *that I might teach others also*, and promote the edification of those who were joining with me, *than ten thousand* of the most pompous and elegant *words in an* [*unknown*] *tongue*, though uttered with the greatest readiness, and expressing conceptions ever so excellent; yea I had rather be entirely silent in an assembly, than take up their time, and prostitute the extraordinary gifts of God, to such vain and foolish purposes. And I heartily wish I may be able to bring you to the same reasonable way of thinking; which would be much to the credit of your own understanding, as well as of your Christian profession.

1 Cor. XIV. 19.

IMPROVEMENT.

How weak and poor a thing is pride and ostentation, and how wise and honourable, *charity* and humility! Who, that has a right discernment, would not rather have been the obscurest *Christian*, that now, almost unseen, joins our assemblies, and in heart at least, humbly puts his *amen* to the petitions presented there, than the most fluent talker at *Corinth;* abusing the special gifts of the *Spirit*, and trifling away, in an unseasonable display of his own, then unprofitable endowments, the precious moments, which were destined to the highest purposes of religious edification? Who must not lament to see pride and vain-glory, so early insinuating themselves into *Christian* societies! Who must not, from so sad an instance, learn to be greatly watchful over their own hearts, on a side where they are subject to such dangerous attacks!

Ver. 2—1

Had the most able and zealous *Protestant* divine endeavoured to expose the absurdity of *praying in an unknown tongue*, as practised in the *church at Rome*, it is difficult to imagine what he could have writ, more fully to the purpose, than the *apostle* hath here done. And when it is considered, how perversely the *Papists* retain the usage of such prayers, it will seem no wonder they should keep the *scriptures* in an unknown tongue too. But they proclaim at the same time, their superstition and idolatry in so *universal* a language, that even a *barbarian* might perceive and learn it in their assemblies. Let us pity, and pray for them, that God

13—16

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God may give their prejudiced minds a juster and happier turn. And since we see the unreasonable and pernicious humour of immutably adhering to ancient customs, prevailing to maintain in the *church of Rome*, so flagrant an absurdity, as praying in an unknown tongue, let it teach us to guard against every degree of the like disposition; and not so much consider, what hath been the practice of any church, in which we were educated, or have chosen to worship, as what the reason of things, and the authority of *scripture* concur to dictate.

18, 19 Of this wise and benevolent *apostle* let us learn, to estimate the value of gifts by their *usefulness;* and to seek above all things *the edification* of our brethren; especially if we are providentially called to minister in public. There is perhaps a manner of 3, 4 *speaking in an unknown tongue*, even when the language of our own country is used; a height of composition, an abstruseness of thought, an obscurity of phrase, which common *Christians* cannot understand. Let not the *ministers* of the humble *Jesus* seek *such high things;* but in this important sense of the exhortation, *condescend to men of low estate.* If the ignorant may be instructed, if the careless may be convinced, if the vicious may be reformed, if the devotion of our *Christian* brethren may be excited, their love to each other cherished, and their holy resolutions confirmed, the great ends of Divine ordinances are answered; and that plainness of speech, which may be most likely to promote them, is rather the glory, than reproach, of the *Christian orator.*

SECT. XXVII.

St. Paul gives proper advices for preventing that abuse of the gift of tongues which he had been reproving in the preceding section. 1 Cor. XIV. 20, *to the end.*

1 CORINTHIANS XIV. 20.

1 COR. XIV. 20.

SECT. XXVII.

MY *brethren*, permit me to be the happy means of forming you to a more noble and manly way of thinking, with respect to these spiritual gifts which are the occasions of so many unbecoming emulations among you. Do you desire to be distinguished in the church? distinguish yourselves by solid wisdom; and *be not*, as this ostentation of tongues would shew you to be, *children in understanding*[a]; *but in malice*

1 Cor. XIV. 20.

BRETHREN, be not children in understanding: howbeit, in malice

a *Children in understanding.*] This is an admirable stroke of true *oratory*, adapted to strike and bring down the height of their spirits, by representing those things in which they were most ready to pride themselves, as comparatively *childish.*—

The

malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.

malice indeed, *be* as much as possible, like *little* *infants;* have all the gentleness, sweetness and innocence of their tender age; *but*, as ye have arrived to years of maturity, *in understanding be perfect* [*men;*] for that religion which the gospel hath now taught you, far from impairing any of the natural faculties, rather exalts and improves them, and directs them to the highest and noblest use. SECT. XXVII. 1 Cor. XIV. 20.

21 In the law it is written, With *men of* other tongues and other lips, will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.

To return to the subject we were upon, you know *it is written in the law*, that is, in the Old Testament, (Isa. xxviii. 11, 12, where God had been complaining of the unteachable disposition of the Jews,) "*Surely in foreign language*[b] *and with foreign lips I will speak unto this people; and even so they will not hear me, saith the Lord:*" which may be considered and interpreted as an intimation of the purpose God had of sending one last message to them, by his servants endued with the gift of tongues. *So that*, according to this intimation, *tongues are a sign not to believers, but to infidels.* The gift was intended to propagate the gospel among those who were strangers to it, not to edify those that had already believed. *Whereas*, on the contrary, *prophecy* [*is*] designed *not for infidels, but believers*, to edify churches already gathered; in which respect it is nobler, and more worthy your pursuit. But as there is a manner of using this gift of tongues, which would even pervert the original end for which it was given, and obstruct, rather than promote, the conversion of infidels, I must observe, *therefore*, that *if the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with* a variety of unknown *tongues, and any* of the *uninstructed, or* in other words, the *infidels, come in*, when they hear such a confused jargon as this must be, *will they not* presently *say that you are distracted,*

21 22

22 Wherefore, tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying *serveth* not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.

23 If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?

23

The word νηπιαζετε refers to *infants*, and is not sufficiently expressed by the word *children*, for they are sometimes vain and sometimes malicious too.—Τελειοι signifies *full grown men;* intimating, it was a kind of *boyishness*, if I may be allowed to use that word, to emulate and quarrel with one another.

b *In foreign language*, &c.] Most *critics* refer these words, as they stand in Isaiah, to the Babylonians, who should come and speak to the Jews in a language unintelligible to them; in which sense the phrase is used elsewhere, Deut. xxviii. 49. Jer. v. 15. *Diodati* thinks the meaning is, "Because they would not attend to plain messages, God would speak to them by such as they could not understand:" and then the *apostle's* argument will be, "Since God threatens this as a curse, do not voluntarily bring it upon the church, merely to make ostentation of your own gifts." But perhaps the *apostle* in this application intends to give us the *true*, though not most obvious interpretation of the words.

c *Secrets*

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distracted, and adopt the censure which was at first so rashly passed in the day of Pentecost, that these men are full of new wine? (Acts ii. 13.)

I Cor. XIV. 24. *Whereas if all prophesy, and an infidel, or ignorant man*, (for I esteem every one ignorant, who is uninstructed in the great mysteries of the gospel, whatever else he may know,) *comes in, he is convicted by all* who thus speak; *he is judged by all;* every one says something to which his

24 But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or *one* unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all:

25 conscience bears witness; *And so the secrets of his heart are made manifest*[c], in a manner to him very surprising and unaccountable; insomuch, that sometimes a person who comes into your assembly out of mere curiosity, or possibly with some ill design, is not able to command himself under the impression which the word of God thus spoken makes upon him; *and so*, under the power of it, *falling down upon [his] face, he will worship* that one living and true *God* whom you adore; *declaring, that* this ever-blessed *God is indeed among you;* and perhaps, immediately professing on that account, his resolution of joining himself to you; and proclaiming afterwards wherever he comes, in what an extraordinary manner he has met with the Divine presence, and what a wonderful impression hath been made upon his mind. Now surely, that degree of honour which is brought to God and his gospel by one such effect of prophesying, should appear far more desirable to you than any applause or admiration which you can receive from your fellow-christians by the exercise of your most splendid gifts.

25 And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on *his* face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

26 I might also urge, upon this head, the great disorder which is introduced into your assemblies, by this ostentatious manner of proceeding; for indeed, if you think seriously, *what a* shocking *thing is it*, my *brethren, that when you come together* for the purposes of social worship, in which all hearts should unite, each of you is desirous

26 How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one

c *Secrets of his heart are made manifest.*] It is very possible, that, (as in the known cases of Nathaniel, and the woman of Samaria, John i. 47; chap. iv. 18,) some secret facts, relating to a stranger, might in some instances be revealed to the *prophet;* perhaps the ill designs which had brought them into the assembly, when they came only as *spies:* and this was well suited to the purpose of producing strong convictions of the presence of God with Christians. But I chose to *paraphrase* the words in such a manner, as to include any remarkable correspondence between what was spoken, and the thoughts and state of the mind which such a stranger might be conscious of. Many memorable instances of which *still* happen, where *ministers* preach in an *experimental* manner; and lasting effects have often been produced, in consequence of such impressions.

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1 Cor. XIV. 26.

26 one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done to edifying.

sirous himself to officiate publicly, in such a manner as best suits his present inclination, without any regard to decency and order? *Every one of you hath a psalm* to read, *hath a doctrine* to inculcate, *hath a tongue* in which to preach or pray, *hath a revelation* of some mystery to produce, *hath an interpretation*, which perhaps he immediately begins, while the person, from whom he is to interpret, hath but begun to speak, and thus five or six[d], if not more, may be speaking at the same time: in consequence of which no one can be distinctly heard, and the assembly degenerates into a kind of tumultuous riot. I beseech you, my friends, to rectify this, and to proceed upon the general canon, which I would recommend to you upon all such occasions, *let all things be done*, not for ostentation, but *for edification*[e], in such a manner as you do in your consciences believe will be most like to do good to the souls of men, and to build up the church of Christ.

27 If any man speak in an *unknown* tongue, *let it be* by two, or at the most *by* three, and that by course; and let one interpret.

28 But if there be no interpreter, let him be silent in the church, and let him speak to himself, and to God.

And in particular, *if any* should *speak with an* [*unknown*] *tongue*, [*let it be*] *by two, or at most*, [*by*] *three* in one meeting, *and* that *by course: and let* some *one* present still *interpret* what is said[f]. *But if there be not an interpreter, let him be silent in the church*[g], where he can do no manner

27

28

d Five or six, &c.] *Five* such cases are mentioned. It seems probable, that some of these Christians were so full of themselves, and so desirous of exercising their respective *gifts*, that without waiting for the permission and direction of him who presided in the assembly, (which in the *synagogues* the *apostles* themselves seem to have done, compare Acts xiii. 15,) several began speaking, or singing, in the same minute, and some began while others were speaking. The manner in which discourses were carried on in the schools of the *philosophers*, where several little knots of disputants seem so to have been engaged at the same time, and what happened in *Jewish synagogues* after worship was concluded, might possibly have given some occasion to an irregularity which to us seems so shocking.

e *Done for edification.*] I must presume to say, that it appears probable to me, that had *one* officer been appointed, as a representative of the *apostle*, to whose direction the society would in conscience have been obliged in all indifferent matters to submit, some hint would have been given of it, amidst the many opportunities which the state of this Corinthian church especially, gave both to St. Paul, and afterwards to Clemens Romanus.

f *Let one interpret.*] In this method it is evident, that any discourse thus delivered, would take up more than twice the time in which it might have been delivered had it first been spoken in a known tongue.

g *If there be no interpreter, let him be silent.*] Dr. Whitby thinks this was only enjoined to avoid the ostentation of a man's speaking, first in an unknown tongue, and then acting as his own interpreter; but I think it evident, from this *text*, compared with verse 13, that a man might have the *gift* of speaking with tongues, who *could not interpret;* and the great difficulty is to say, how this could happen, and yet the thing wanting not be *another tongue;* which the distinction between *the gift of tongues*, and the *interpretation of tongues*, seems to demonstrate that it was not. I can only offer a *conjecture* here, which it becomes me to do with the greater modesty, as I think it is

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manner of service by uttering what none but himself can understand; *and let him speak to himself, and to God:* let him make use of this language in his own private devotions, if he has a mind by exercise to keep up his readiness in it: but let him not produce it so unreasonably, as in the present case. And as for those prophesyings which we chiefly speak of, when scriptures are explained; *let* only *two or three of the prophets speak* in one assembly; *and let the rest judge*, and compare one doctrine with another for the farther improvement of all. *But if* while the discourse continues, [*any thing*] *be revealed to another that sitteth by, let* him not immediately arise, and interrupt *the first;* but let him sit still, till he *have done speaking*[h]. *For* by this means *ye may all*, who are thus furnished for it, *prophesy one by one, that* your instruction and consolation may not be thrown away, which would be the case, if many were speaking at once; but *all may learn, and all may be comforted.* And there is no impossibility of doing this; *for* the Spirit of God that inspires you, is not a wild irresistible impulse, like that, by which the Pythian priestess, and others who profess inspiration and prophesy among the Gentiles, pretend to be agitated; but *the spirits*, or inspirations, *of the* Christian *prophets* produce those

1 Cor. XIV. 28.

29

30

31

32

interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.

29 Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.

30 If *any thing* be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.

31 For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.

32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

a pretty singular one; (as indeed the difficulty itself, great as it is, has seldom been stated by *commentators.*) The miracle, which conferred the *gifts* of tongues, seems to have been the instantaneous impressing on the mind the familiar and perfect knowledge of a language with which the person was before unacquainted; yet so, that from that time the person receiving it should be able, without any new miracle, to use it as he thought fit, and this, as Dr. *Leland* well observes, is the only *hypothesis* on which the abuse of this *gift* can be accounted for. (See *Leland against Morgan*, Vol. I. chap. xiii. p. 375.) But I apprehend, that though every man using this *gift*, and understanding what he said, must have been able to have rendered his discourse sentence by sentence, into his native language, he might be unable to render it into a *third*, which might be that of many present. Now in such a circumstance, the *gift of interpretation* might take place, if it consisted, as I conjecture it did, in an instantaneous capacity of understanding a strange language, just for that time, and rendering what was spoken in it, into the native tongue of the interpreter. (Compare the *paraphrase on chap.* xii. *verse* 10.) On this *hypothesis*, and truly I think on this alone, one, who had the *gift* of interpretation, might not be able to speak any foreign language at all; and he who had the *gift* of a tongue, might not in some circumstances be able to interpret to those who were then his hearers. In this case, the *gift of interpretation*, enabling a man only to act a secondary part, would be less splendid; but whenever it was exercised, it would always argue the person under an *immediate* agency of the Spirit, and conduce to his usefulness.

h *Let the first have done speaking.*] So I think σιγαλω must here be rendered; for if the direction had been, "Let him that was speaking immediately hold his peace, as soon as another intimates that he has a revelation;" it would introduce a confusion, which this advice was intended to prevent; and I think such an interpretation equally inconsistent with reason, and the connection of the place. Compare verse 32, 33.

those calm emotions which *are subject to the prophets:* they leave a man master of himself, so that he can moderate his passions, and wait the most convenient time and manner of uttering his oracles. *For God is not* [*the*] [*author*] *of* disorder and *confusion, but of peace* and regularity; and this orderly method of proceeding, I the rather urge upon you, *as* it is practised *in all the* other *churches of the saints;* and I should be sorry, that you, my Corinthians friends, should be remarkable for the irregularity of your proceedings, when God hath been pleased so graciously to distinguish you by such a variety of gifts, and the flourishing state of your society.

33 For God *is* not *the author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

33

34 Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but *they are commanded* to be under obedience, as also saith the law.

Let your women be silent in your religious *assemblies*, if they have not some extraordinary revelation; *for it is not* commonly *permitted to them to speak* on such public occasions, *but* it is their duty *to be in subjection* to the superior authority of the man; *as the law also says*, in recording that early sentence on Eve and her daughters for the first trangression, (Gen. iii. 16,) To him shall be thy desire subjected, and he shall rule over thee.

34

35 And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for a woman to speak in the church.

And if they have a mind to learn the meaning of *any thing* which they cannot well understand, *let them ask their own husbands at home*, as they may more conveniently and freely talk with them, without any appearance of ostentation, or suspicion, of any other ill principles; but let them not break in upon the assembly with questions; *for it is* evidently an *indecent* thing *for a woman to speak in the church* [i], and suits very ill with that modesty and reserve which is so universally esteemed an ornament to the sex.

35

36 What? came the word of God out from you

I know the present custom among you is contrary to some of these regulations, and perhaps some opposition may be made to them: but permit me to ask, *Did the word of God* indeed *come out from you* [k]? Are you the first church in the world

36

i *A woman to speak*, &c.] There is an apparent difficulty in reconciling this with chap. xi. 5, 13, in which the *apostle* seems to grant a liberty, which he here denies. Besides the solution suggested in the *paraphrase on verse* 34; some have thought, he intended in the former passage only to say, how *women* should speak, if they spoke at all; but here absolutely to *prohibit* their doing it: but I cannot think he would debate and adjust the circumstances of doing an unlawful action. Taking this prohibition to be universal, I should suppose with Dr. Whitby, that *prophesying* in the foregoing place, signified *singing psalms* and *praying*, not leading the devotions, *but joining with others in prayer.*

k *Did the word*, &c.] That *scoticism, whether did the word of God come forth from you alone*, would be the exactest *version of* η αφ υμων, &c.

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1 Cor. XIV.

world, by whose example all others should be modelled? *Or did it reach to you alone?* Are you the last, and the only christian society, that you should take upon you to act in so singular a manner? The gospel came from Jerusalem, it is going all over the world, and therefore I must admonish you to behave with such a modest respect to others as becomes those who know yourselves to be but a very small part of that noble and extensive body.

you? or came it unto you only?

37 And *if any of you appear to be a prophet, or spiritual* [*person*] endowed with extraordinary gifts above his brethren, *let him* prove that he is indeed under the influence of the Divine Spirit, by his submission and obedience to these determinations; for he must necessarily *acknowledge, that the things which I* now *write unto you, are the commandments of the Lord*, dictated by inspiration from him, and not the private conception of my own mind. *But if any one is*, or affects to appear, *ignorant*, or uncertain about it, *let him be ignorant*[l]: if he pretend not to own these decisions, I shall not enter into any debate with him; let him stand by the consequence of his ignorance, whether real or affected. But I am confident, that most of you have received proofs of my mission, too convincing to be shaken by any petulant opposition which may arise against it.

37 If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you, are the commandments of the Lord.

38 But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.

39 *Therefore*, my *brethren*, to conclude this long discourse, and to sum up the point in a few words, *desire* chiefly *to prophesy*, and *yet forbid not* those who are willing to do it, under such regulations as I have advanced, *to speak with tongues*; for it is a noble endowment, which I would encourage none to slight or neglect.

39 Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.

40 But especially remember this great comprehensive rule, to be applied to a thousand varieties which may arise, *Let all things be done decently*[m] *and according to order*: let all be conducted in a regular manner, to prevent such disturbances, disputes

40 Let all things be done decently, and in order.

l *Let him be ignorant.*] Dr. Whitby would render αγνοειτω, *let him not be acknowledged to be a true prophet*; but that is changing the interpretation of the word in a manner one would not choose to admit without greater necessity.

m *Decently*, &c.] It must be by a mere accommodation, that this expression can be applied to *ceremonies*, which may be decent or indecent, according to different circumstances attending them. In the sense given in the *paraphrase*, the words are used by the *philosopher*, when he exhorts men to consider the exact order and regular motions of the *heavenly bodies* that they may thereby learn το ευσχημον και το τεταγμενον, *what is decent and orderly*. *Whichot's Sel. Serm.* p. 177, *Edin. Edit.*

disputes, and scandals for the future, as have already arisen in your society, and will proceed to greater evils, if you do not immediately set upon reforming them. SECT. XXVII. 1 Cor. XIV. 40

IMPROVEMENT.

How fondly do men flatter themselves with empty appearances! And often, how justly do those deserve the imputation of childish folly, the height of whose temper will least allow them to bear it! Let us dare to examine ourselves impartially, and be concerned that we may not be children in understanding; but forming our minds on the maxims of scripture, and our lives on the example of Christ, may we grow up in him *to the measure of the stature of a perfect man.* But let us be *children in malice:* let us endeavour to be as free from every gloomy, malignant, selfish passion, as new-born infants are. Who can say he has fully attained this happy and amiable character? Yet let us follow after it; remembering, that there is a sense, in which, (proud and interested, envious and malignant, as alas! we too much are, we must become *as little children, or we cannot inherit the kingdom of God.* Ver 20

Those extraordinary gifts, which suited the first planting of Christianity in the world, are now ceased; but let us bless God, they were ever given: and that we have such an incontestable evidence of the truth of the gospel as this chapter affords. Such endowments must certainly argue a Divine power, setting its seal to the gospel; and the reality of such endowments can never be questioned, when we reflect on the manner in which the apostle here reproves the abuse of them; and that in a society where so many were alienated from him and his ministry; and consequently, where such appeals, if not founded on the strictest and most apparent truth, must have exposed him to a contempt never to have been removed.

These miraculous gifts, having abundantly answered their end, are wisely withdrawn; yet still the Divine presence is with the church; of which we have this happy proof, that there are those who find *the secret of their hearts made manifest,* by the faithful and skilful administration of Christian ordinances: so that if they do not publicly *fall down upon their faces,* in such extraordinary transports, they inwardly adore the Lord God in their hearts, and acknowledge that he is with his church of a truth. May instances of this kind be more frequent, and may the spirituality and fervour with which Divine ordinances shall be administered, be such as may afford more reason to expect them! 24, 25

Let us regard God, *as the author, not of confusion, but of peace;* making it our concern to behave in his sanctuary, in a manner 33

agreeable

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agreeable to this view; with such solemn decorum, and with such a tender regard to the edification and comfort of each other, as he may approve. May the God of peace deliver Christians, of every sect, and rank, from that spiritual pride which has thrown many religious societies into great disorder. And, to advance a state, so happy, as that of humility and love must necessarily be, may what *the apostles have written, be acknowledged as the commandments of the Lord;* and christian worship, and practice, be more regulated by their truly *authentic canons*; which would render many that have been since devised, relating to indifferent matters, an unnecessary, as some others are burdensome, superstitious, and absurd.

Ver. 33

37

SECT. XXVIII.

The apostle enters on his discourse concerning the resurrection of the dead; which he introduces with some remarks on the certainty and importance of Christ's resurrection. 1 Cor. XV. 1—11.

1 CORINTHIANS XV. 1.

SECT. XXVIII.

THERE is one topic more that remains to be handled, of those concerning which you write to me; I mean, the great doctrine of the resurrection of the dead; which I perceive some among you begin to doubt; whether seduced by any Jewish teachers of Sadducean principles, or biassed by the vain pretences of heathen philosophers, who would despise it as a mean and unworthy hope[a]. *But I make known unto you, brethren,* and remind you of *the gospel which I* have *preached to you* at the very beginning of my ministry among you; *which ye have also received* with readiness and delight, *and in which ye* may be said to *stand*, as much of your establishment in Christianity will depend on your retaining it in its genuine simplicity and purity;

1 Cor. XV. 1.

2 *By which* gospel *also*, whereof the doctrine of the resurrection makes so considerable a part, *ye are*

1 Cor. XV. 1.

MOREOVER, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also you have received, and wherein ye stand.

2 By which also ye are

a Unworthy hope.] It is well known, that the primitive Christians were often insulted by the heathen philosophers, for their hope of a resurrection; which one of them, ridiculously enough, calls *the hope of worms.* Compare 2 Tim. xi. 18. and the note there. Others taught virtue to be *its own necessary* reward, in such a manner as tended to overthrow the strongest of all natural arguments for a future state; I mean, that taken from such an unequal distribution of rewards and punishments, as could not otherwise take place under the government of a righteous God. If Christians were by this tempted so to refine on the doctrine of the *resurrection*, as in effect to explain it away, it shews the propriety of the *apostle's* setting himself to prove the resurrection of Christians, rather than a resurrection in general.

b *Retain.*]

are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

are happily brought into the way of being completely and eternally *saved, if ye* faithfully *retain* [b] *those joyful tidings which I delivered unto you; unless indeed* [c] *ye have believed in vain:* which will certainly be the case, if ye let go that great anchor of your soul which must support it in the fierce storms and tempests to which you will here be exposed. SECT. XXVIII. 1 Cor. XV. 2,

3 For I delivered unto you first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures:

For I delivered to you among the first [*principles*] which I inculcated, when I came to preach the gospel among you, *what I have also received* [d], and been taught by Divine inspiration, *that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures* of the Old Testament, in which he was foretold, and represented, as the great Sin-offering; (Isai. liii. 6, 12; Dan. ix. 26.) 3

4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the scriptures:

And I also instructed you, *that he was buried* in a new tomb; *and that* his dead body was kept by a guard of his enemies: but kept in vain, for to their confusion, and the perpetual establishment of the faith and hope of his humble followers, *he was raised the third day according to the scriptures* [e], which intimate that he should not see corruption in the grave. (Psal. xvi. 10.) 4

5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve.

And in confirmation of this great truth, I told you, *that* the same day that he rose, *he was seen* first *of Cephas*, or Peter, to whom, that he might comfort his wounded heart under its sorrows for his late fall, he condescended to make his first appearance, excepting that to the women at the sepulchre; and *afterwards* he was seen *by* that company who were called *the twelve* [f] apostles, though several of 5

b *Retain.*] So κατεχετε evidently signifies. *To keep in memory*, suggests a very inadequate sense.

c *Unless indeed.*] Εκτος ει μη is a very remarkable form of expression. Perhaps there may be more in it than most readers are aware. If I mistake not, it suggests the thought expressed, verse 17. So the two first verses may be a transition; as if he had said, I preach the *same gospel* still, and I hope you will retain it; yet I have reason to fear some of you entertain notions which tend quite to enervate it.

d *Received.*] For the import of this phrase, see Gal. i. 12; 1 Cor. xi. 23.

e *Raised the third day, according to the scriptures.*] It has been queried, where the *scriptures* foretel that Christ should rise from the dead on the third day, Some think there is a *transposition* or *parenthesis*; so that the meaning will be, he rose again, according to the *scriptures*; and this on the third day. *Chand. of Christianity*, p. 370; and so Dr. *Bullock* replies, that he would have risen according to the *scriptures*, had it been on the fifth or tenth day. (*Bull. Vind.* p. 48.) But Mr. *Jefferies*, whom I follow in the *paraphrase*, gives what appeared to me the best solution, as it is intimated, John xi. 39, that bodies began to corrupt on the fourth day. See *Jeff. Review*, p. 127.

f *Of the twelve.*] It is certain, neither Judas nor Thomas were there; and as it is observed below, James might probably be absent; but as the council of *twenty-three* among the Jews might be said to be assembled, if the greater part were present, though the number might not be complete; so the company might be called the *twelve*, though we should suppose the *fourth* part to have been absent. Compare Mark xvi. 14; Luke xxiv. 36; John xx. 26.

SECT. XXVIII.

of the number were then absent. *Afterwards he appeared* according to his repeated appointments, *to above five hundred brethren at once*[g] in Galilee, where he gave the most glorious and incontestible proof of the reality of his resurrection, in the presence of this great concourse, *of whom the greater part continue* [*alive*] *until now*, and constitute a cloud of witnesses to this important truth; *but some are fallen asleep* in Jesus, and gone to dwell with him, as the great Lord of life.

1 Cor. XV. 6.

6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once: of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

7 And you may remember, I told you also, that *after this he was seen of James*, and *afterwards*, just before his ascension, *by all the apostles*[h].

7 After that, he was seen of James: then of all the apostles.

8 *But last of all he also appeared to me, as to* an embrio, or *one born out of due time*, a poor, weak, contemptible creature, from whom nothing good was to be expected, not worthy of the least patience; how much less worthy of being marked out with such distinguishing favours!

8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

9 *For* I must humbly acknowledge, and I would continually bear it in my mind, that *I am the least of* all *the apostles, who am not* indeed *worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God*; on which account, considering the transports of my savage zeal, I think myself hardly deserving to be numbered mongst the meanest followers of my Divine Master, and less than the least of all saints. (Eph. iii. 8.)

9 For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

10 *But by the grace of God I am what I am*, a Chris-

10 But by the grace of

g *Above five hundred.*] Probably it was in Galilee, where there was such a number of disciples; though there were no more than an *hundred and twenty* at Jerusalem, when Matthias was chosen. Dr. Prideaux, Mr. Ditton, and many others, urge this as a glorious proof of the resurrection of Christ. Had it been an imposture, *so many* false hearts and tongues could never have acted in concert; nor would they *all* have kept a secret, which remorse, interest, and perhaps often torture, might urge them to divulge; especially as there had been *one* traitor among the *twelve*, on account of which, had they been conscious of fraud, a general suspicion of each other's secrecy must have arisen. See *Prid. Lett. to a Deist*, p. 241.

h *By all the apostles.*] The change of *phrase*, from that in the conclusion of the 5th verse, is very remarkable; and, as a very learned, candid, and sagacious person, has suggested to me, it very probably intimates, that they who were there called *the twelve*, that is, the greater part of the company who used to be so denominated, were not *all* the *apostles*. On which circumstance this gentleman grounds a very probable conjecture, that James might, by some accident, perhaps illness, or affairs indispensably necessary, be detained from meeting his brethren, both on the day of the resurrection, and that day seven-night, and likewise at the time when Christ appeared to the *five hundred*; and that he might, in this respect, be upon a level with them, our Lord appeared to him *alone*, after all the appearances mentioned before. And this account of the matter appears vastly more credible than that which St. Jerome quotes from the *gospel of the Nazarenes*, that on the death of Christ, James made a vow, that he would neither eat nor drink till he saw Christ risen from the dead: an event of which the *apostles* had certainly no expectation.

of God I am what I am; and his grace which *was bestowed* upon me, was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

Christian, an apostle, and not inferior to any of my honoured brethren in that office; *and his grace* [*manifested*] *towards me*, in raising me to so high a dignity, and so happy a state, *was not* displayed *in vain: but I laboured more abundantly than they all*, conscious that I could never do enough to balance the mischief I had formerly committed, or answer the obligations under which such rich and distinguishing mercy laid me. I exerted myself therefore to the utmost in my apostolical work; which should, by the way, shelter me from the contempt which some are ready to throw upon me: *yet*, to speak more properly, it was *not I, but the grace of God that was with me:* God furnished me for the work, he excited me to diligence and zeal in it; to him be the glory of all. His grace was the cause of all; and *whether therefore I, or they*, laboured most, and to whomsoever we delivered our message, whether among you, or elsewhere, *so we preach, and so ye believed.* All agree in bearing our testimony to the death and resurrection of Christ, and ye, with all other Christians, have agreed to receive it, as the great foundation of our holy religion.

SECT. XXVIII.

1 Cor. XV. 10.

11 Therefore, whether *it were* I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed. 11

IMPROVEMENT.

LET it be the daily joy of our hearts, to think how firm that foundation stands, and what various and convincing evidence we have, that as *Christ* became incarnate, visited this wretched world, and *died for our sins, according to the scriptures;* that as he condescended to go down into the caverns of the grave, and lie there in the cold and silent tomb, humbled in the dust of death; so also, *according to the same scriptures, he was raised again on the third day.* Let us be very thankful, that such convincing proof was given of his resurrection, demonstrated by such infallible tokens, and repeated appearances, *to all the apostles;* who had every opportunity the most scrupulous doubt could demand, of examining at leisure into its certainty. *More than five hundred persons were witnesses to it at one time;* and witnesses, who *survived* to many future years to attest this important fact, *that our faith and hope might be in God:* in God, *who quickeneth the dead,* and who by this *resurrection of Jesus his Son, hath begotten us again to a lively hope of an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.* As we have received, so let us *stand* fast

Ver. 3 4 5

SECT. XXVIII.

fast in this doctrine; and remember, that our *salvation depends on* our stedfastly *retaining it*, and that we *believe in vain*, and worse than in vain, if we ever, on any considerations, *make shipwreck of faith, and of a good conscience.*

It is matter of joy and thankfulness, that *St. Paul* was added to this cloud of witnesses, who attested the resurrection of *Jesus*; that great *apostle*, in whom *the grace of God* was so richly magnified; magnified particularly in that humility which he here expresses in so amiable a manner; calling *himself the least of the apostles*, and declaring that he was *unworthy of the name of an apostle*; and amidst all the labours and glories of this eminent station in the church, still keeping in his eyes *that madness* with which, in the days of his infidelity, he *had wasted it.* Shall we not all learn of him to say, *By the grace of God I am what I am?* Let us be solicitous, that his grace bestowed upon us *be not in vain*; and ever bearing in mind the many sins of our unconverted state, and our great unprofitableness *since we have known God, or rather been known of him*, let us labour in our Lord's service with proportionable zeal; and when we have laboured to the utmost, and exerted ourselves with the greatest fidelity and resolution, let us ascribe it to that Divine agency which strengthened us for all, and say again, though some should esteem it a disagreeable tautology, *Not I, but the grace of God that was with me.*

SECT. XXIX.

The Apostle shews the necessary connection between the resurrection of Christ, which he had established above, and the resurrection of the dead; and urges the importance of retaining that great fundamental of Christianity: in the series of his argument mentioning the surrender of the mediatorial kingdom which Christ shall make at the consummation of all things. 1 Cor. XV. 12—34.

SECT. XXIX.

1 Cor. XV. 12.

1 CORINTHIANS XV. 12.

YOU have heard, my brethren, something of the convincing evidence which attended this great and important doctrine of Christ's resurrection; *but if Christ is* thus *preached, that he was* assuredly *raised from the dead, how do some among you* presume *to say, That there is no resurrection of the dead?* With what face can any, who allow of Christ's resurrection, pretend to deny the other, whether out of an attachment to Sadducean, or philosophical prejudices?

13 *For* it is certain, that *if there is no resurrection of the dead*, if that doctrine be in the general alto-

1 Cor. XV. 12.

NOW if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you, that there is no resurrection of the dead?

13 But if there be no resurrection of the dead

dead, then Christ is not risen.

14 And if Christ be not risen, then *is* our preaching vain, and your faith *is* also vain.

15 Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God, that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.

16 For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:

17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith *is* vain; ye are yet in your sins.

18 Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ, are perished.

altogether incredible, then *neither is Christ raised*[a]. *And* this would be a consequence, at once the most false, and the most melancholy, that can be conceived; for *if Christ be not raised, then our preaching*, which pretends to take its authority from a commission after his resurrection, in a view of declaring the certainty of it [*is*] *vain; and your faith*, founded chiefly upon the testimony which God then bore to him, [*is*] *also vain. Yea, and we* the apostles, notwithstanding all the miraculous evidences we give of the truth of our mission, *are found*, what I am sure you cannot believe we are, *false witnesses of God; because* you know that *we bore* this as our most important and solemn *testimony concerning God, that he raised up Christ, whom* nevertheless *he* indeed *did not raise up, if* the notion of a resurrection in the general be, as they teach, an absurdity, and *the dead rise not all.* I repeat it again, as a point of the highest consequence; *for if the dead are not* finally to be *raised, neither is Christ raised: And* what terrible consequences would arise from hence? Surely such as might be sufficient to strike us with horror: for *if Christ be not raised*, all *your faith* in the gospel [*is*] *vain*, and ye are without any salvation: *ye are* in that case *still in your sins*[b], under the pressure of their unexpiated guilt; for with the doctrine of the resurrection of Christ, that of the efficacy of his atonement is inseparably connected. And *then also* there would be this deplorable consequence farther attending, that *they who sleep in Christ, are perished;* even all deceased Christians, not excepting the most excellent of them, who have died for their religion. They have lost their life and being together, on this supposition, in the cause of one, who, if still among the dead, must have been an impostor, and false prophet.

SECT. XXIX.

1 Cor. XV. 14.

15

16

17

18

And

a *Neither is Christ raised.*] This argument, on which the *apostle* dwells in so copious a manner, would appear to be of great moment, whatever the principles were by which the doctrine of the *resurrection* was assaulted. It could not be said, that was in its own nature *impossible*, which was accomplished in Christ; and it would prove, that the hope of a *resurrection* was not, as the Gentiles represented it, *a mean and sordid hope*, since it was accomplished in the Son of God. Compare verse 1, *note* a.

b *Still in your sins.*] This plainly shews how necessary it was that there should be something *more than reformation*, which was plainly in fact wrought, in order to their being delivered from their sins; even that *atonement*, the sufficiency of which God attested by raising our great *Surety* from the grave.

c *Of*

SECT. XXIX.

1 Cor. XV. 19.

And this scheme, which would represent those that sleep in Christ as perished, would, I am sure, be a very terrible doctrine to us the apostles of Jesus, in such a circumstance as this; for *if* it were *in this life only* that *we have hope in Christ, we*, who are exposed to such a variety of calamities and dangers for his sake, *were of all men* in the world *the most pitiable*[c]: since it is evident, that amidst such evils as these, nothing could comfort and support us, but the hopes of immortality; and we must be at once the vilest, and the most wretched of mankind, if, while we make such pretences to them, we were indeed governed by any lower views.

19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

20 *But* we will *now* dwell no longer on these melancholy suppositions, for we assuredly know that *Christ is* indeed *risen from the dead*[d]; [*and*] we are sure, that in this his resurrection, he is *become the first-fruits of them that slept*[e]; so 21 that it is the security of ours. *For as death* [*came*] on the whole human race *by* means of one *man*, who brought mortality on all his posterity as the consequence of that one great offence, *so likewise by* means of another *man* [*cometh*] *the resurrection of the dead*; and our happy

20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, *and* become the first-fruits of them that slept.

21 For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead.

c *Of all men the most pitiable:* ελεεινοτεροι.] It is quite foreign to the purpose, to argue from this *text*, as some have done, that "if there were no future state, virtue would make men more miserable than they would otherwise be." It is evident, St. Paul here speaks, not of the case of *good men in general*, if their hopes of future happiness should after all be disappointed; but of the case of the *apostles*, and other preachers of Christianity, if amidst all their hardships and persecutions, they were not supported by this hope. Destitute of this amidst the extremest sufferings, they must have been perpetually subjected to the upbraidings of their own minds, for sacrificing every view of happiness in this world or another, to advance what they knew to be a pernicious falsehood. Perhaps there never were men on earth so criminal, and so wretched, as they must, on this supposition, have been. See the thought illustrated at large in my *Sermons on the Power and Grace of Christ*, &c. *Serm.* ix.

d *Christ is* indeed *risen*, &c.] It is a great mistake to imagine that the *apostle* is employed throughout this chapter in *proving the resurrection*. The proof lies in a very little room, chiefly verses 12—19, and almost all the rest of the chapter is taken up in *illustrating*, *vindicating*, or *applying* it. The proof is indeed very short, but most solid and convincing—that which arose from Christ's resurrection. Now that not only proved a resurrection to be in fact *not impossible*, but, which was much more, as it proved him to be a Divine Teacher, it proved the *doctrine* of a *general* resurrection, which he so expressly *taught*. It was natural for so good a man also, to insist on the sad consequences which would follow with respect to himself and his brethren, from giving up so glorious a hope; and the cordial manner in which he speaks of this, is a noble *internal* argument, which I hope many of my readers will *feel*, though I have been obliged to be less copious in the *paraphrase* than I could have wished.

e *First-fruits of them that slept.*] It is without sufficient reason, that Mr. *Fleming*, (*Christ.* Vol. I. p. 218,) would render απαρχη, *ruler*, *governor*, or *commander*.—Κεκοιμημενων here is explained by κοιμηθεντες, verse 18, and both must refer to Christians, of whose resurrection alone, and not that of the wicked, he evidently speaks in this whole chapter.

happy relation to him abundantly repairs the damage we sustained by our fatal relation to the former. *For as in Adam all are dead*, and a sentence of inevitable death is come upon us all, as descended from him; *so* we Christians have a joyful persuasion for ourselves, and for our brethren, that, (though we are neither capable of effecting or meriting such a change,) *in Christ* we *all shall also be made alive.* *But* it was fit that *every one* should be re-animated, raised and glorified *in his own order:* it was fit that *Christ*, after a very short abode in the grave, should rise as *the first-fruits*, and as such should present himself to God, and use his recovered life in his service; *and they who are Christ's* property, the whole body of those that belong to him, should be raised up a considerable time *afterwards*, and appear as a glorious harvest in full maturity, *at* the important hour of *his coming*, when his voice shall awaken, and his almighty hand restore them.

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1 Cor. XV. 22.

22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

23 But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits, afterward they that are Christ's, at his coming.

And *then* [*shall*] *the end* of the world [*be,*] the grand catastrophe of all those wonderful scenes that have held in suspence so many succeeding generations; *when he shall* publicly and solemnly *deliver up the* mediatorial *kingdom to God, even the Father*, by whose commission he has held it, and to whose glory he has always administered it; *when he shall have abolished*[f] and deposed *all principality, and all authority and power*, that has opposed itself to his government, and shall have triumphed over all the efforts, which either men or devils could ever make against his ever-growing empire and dominion. *For* we know, that according to the tenor of that ancient prophecy, (Psal. cx. 1,) which carries with it so illustrious a reference to the Messiah and his kingdom, *he must reign, till he have put all* [*his*] *enemies under his feet;* so as that they should become his footstool, and subserve that exaltation which they have endeavoured to prevent. And so universal shall the triumph be, that *the* very *last enemy*, [*even*] *death, shall be* deposed and *destroyed:* that enemy

24 Then *cometh* the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power.

25 For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

26 The last enemy *that*

f *Abolished* and deposed.] The word καταργεομαι generally signifies, "divesting a thing of some power, whether lawful or usurped, which it formerly had, and reducing it to an incapacity of exerting that energy any more." Thus it is used of Satan, Heb. ii. 14; of *death* here, and ver. 26, and 2 Tim. i. 10; of *temporal princes*, 1 Cor. i. 28, chap. ii. 6; and of the *ceremonial law*, Eph. ii. 15.

g *Then*

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my which continues in some measure to hold the subjects of Christ under its dominion, even when the temptations of the world, and the malice of Satan, can hold them no longer, and when every remainder of corrupt nature and human infirmity has long since ceased in the perfect holiness of the intermediate state, and its unmingled serenity and joy.

1 Cor. XV. 26.

that shall be destroyed, *is* death.

27 This, I say, must necessarily be implied: *for* it is elsewhere said, *he hath put all things under his feet*, (Psal. viii. 6,) and it must accordingly be accomplished; *but* [*it is*] *evident* enough, *that when he saith, that all things were subjected* to him, *it is with the exception of him by whom all things were* thus *subjected to him.* None can surely imagine, that the Son was ever to reign over the great and glorious Father of all; but on the contrary it may naturally be concluded, that he would still direct his administration to the glory of him from whom he received his king-

27 For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under *him, it is* manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him.

28 dom. *But when* the Father shall have fulfilled this promise in its utmost extent, and *all things shall be subjected to him*, so that it shall appear to every eye, that he is indeed Lord of all; *then shall the Son also himself*, amidst all the glories of that triumph, be, and declare himself to *be, subject to him that subjected all things to him*[g], by a public act, in the midst of this most august assembly, giving up, as it were, his commission to preside as universal Lord in the mediatorial kingdom, to him; as having answered the end for which it was given him, in the complete salvation of all his people, whom he shall then introduce into a state of the greatest near-

28 And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

ness

g *Then shall the Son also himself be subject*, &c.] I hope I shall be forgiven, if after the best attention I could use, I have missed the true and exact sense of this most *difficult text*. It is surprising to find authors of such different sentiments, as Witsius, and Crellius, agreeing to speak of Christ, as returning, as it were, to a *private* station, and being "*as one of his brethren*," when he has thus given up the kingdom. The union of the Divine and human natures in the person of the great *Emanuel*, the incomparable virtues of his character, the glory of his actions, and the relation he bears to his people, with all the *texts* which assert the perpetuity of his government, prohibit our imagining that he shall ever cease to be illustriously distinguished from all others, whether men or angels, in the heavenly world through eternal ages. To me it appears, that the *kingdom* to be given up, is the *rule of this lower world*, which is then to be consumed; and that it may not seem, as if a province of his empire were destroyed, his administration, undertaken in avowed subservience to the scheme of redemption, (Eph. i. 10,) and compleated in the resurrection of all his people, shall close in a *decent* and *honourable* manner; God will declare the ends of it fully answered, and the whole body of his people shall be introduced by him into a state of more intimate approach to, and communion with God, than had been known by the spirits of the blessed in their separate state.

h *Who*

ness to God, and most intimate converse with him; *that God may be*, and that he may appear to be, *all in all;* that they all may enjoy complete and everlasting happiness, in the full communication of the Divine favour to them, for ever, in a world where they shall no longer need a Mediator to introduce them to him. SECT. XXIX. 1 Cor. XV. 28.

29 Else what shall they do, which are baptized for the dead if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?

Such are our views and hopes, as christians; 29 *else* if it were not so, *what should they do, who are baptized* in token of their embracing the christian faith *in the room of the dead* [h], who are just fallen in the cause of Christ, but are yet supported by a succession of new converts, who immediately offer themselves, to fill up their places, as ranks of soldiers, that advance to the combat in the room of their companions, who have just been slain in their sight. *If* the doctrine I oppose, be true, and *the dead are not raised at all, why are they nevertheless* thus *baptized in the room of the dead*, as cheerfully ready at the peril of their lives to keep up the cause of Jesus in the world? *And* indeed, how could my conduct be accounted for in any other light, but by supposing, that we act with a steady and governing view to this great principle, and this glorious hope? *Why* otherwise *are we every hour exposed to* so much *danger*, in the service of a master from whom it is evident we have no secular rewards to expect? Yet, my brethren, *I* do upon this solemn occassion *protest*, and even swear *to you*, by the greatest of all asseverations, by our hopes and our joys as Christians, *by our rejoicing* [i] and confidence common

30 And why stand we in jeopardy every hour.

31 I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.

h *Who are baptized in the room of the dead.*] It would be almost endless to enumerate, and much more to canvass, all the interpretations which have been given of this obscure and ambiguous *phrase*, υπερ των νεκρων. I think that of Sir Richard Ellys, which I have given in the *paraphrase*, much preferable to any other. See *Fortuita Sacra*, p. 137, &c. As for other interpretations, there is no reason to believe, that the superstitious custom, mentioned by Epiphanius, of baptizing a living person, as representing one who had died unbaptized, is here referred to; it is more likely to have risen from a mistake of this passage, than to have been so early prevalent. Mr. Cradock's supposing it to allude to washing dead bodies, neither suits the grammar, nor really makes any significant sense. Nor is there any need of supposing, that νεκρων is put for νεκρε, and refers to their being baptized into the religion of Jesus, who, on the adversary's hypothesis, is *still dead*. The senses, which Crellius, and Bishop Atterbury maintain, differ so little from each other, and that we have given, that it may suffice to say, that each expresses but a part of the sense, and loses something of the spirit which we apprehend in these words.

i *Our rejoicing.*] Our received *copies* read it, υμετεραν, *your rejoicing*; but the reading which I follow, seems so much more natural and easy, that one can scarce forbear believing it authentic. Yet it may be interpreted into a very pertinent sense, "I protest by *your* joys, which I do so cordially take part in, that I may call them my own."

k *Fought*

SECT. XXIX.

common to us all, and *which I* with you *have in Christ Jesus our Lord;* I protest, I say, by this, that *I daily die;* that is, that I am every day surrounded, as it were, with death in its most terrible forms, and bear so many evils, that every hour of my life seems a new martyrdom. One great instance of this has so lately happened, that I cannot forbear mentioning it. *If* to speak *after the manner of men*, or to use a common proverbial phrase, *I have*, like a slave exposed upon a public theatre, *fought with* wild *beasts at Ephesus*[k], having been assaulted with the most savage fury by a tumultuous multitude there, *what advantage have I* gained by such a combat, if my hopes may not be allowed to open into immortality? On the contrary, *if the dead rise not* at all, the epicurean maxim might seem to be justified, "Let us make the best of this short life, which is the whole period of our being; and giving up those sublime sentiments and pursuits which belong not to creatures of so short and low an existence, *let us eat and drink, since we* are to *die*, as it were, *to-morrow*[l], or the next day: for so little is the difference between one period of

1 Cor. XV. 31.

32 If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus; what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.

k *Fought with wild beasts at Ephesus.*] The stories which *Nicephorus*, (*lib.* II. *cap.* 25,) and *Theodoret* give us, of an encounter which St. Paul had with *wild beasts* on the theatre at Ephesus, (see *Witsii Mel. Vit. Paul. cap.* viii. *sect.* 23, &c.) have been so far regarded by Dr. Whitby, that he contends for the literal interpretation of this passage; in favour of which it is also urged, that had he spoken of *brutal men*, he would rather have mentioned the assaults that were made upon him at Lystra, where he was stoned, and supposed to be dead. But the danger of being pulled to pieces might be greater at Ephesus; it had happened very *lately*, and as the scene was much *nearer Corinth*, it might be more natural for him to mention it here. The silence of St. Luke in his history, as to so memorable an event, as a combat with *beasts* would have been, and St. Paul's omitting it in the large catalogue of his sufferings, (2 Cor. xi. 23,) together with his known privilege as a *Roman citizen*, which would *probably*, as to be sure it should *legally*, have protected him from such an insult, do all, (as Mr. Cradock, and others have observed,) favour the figurative interpretation. And the expression, *κατα ανθρωπον*, *after the manner of men*, *or humanly speaking*, has a propriety on this *hypothesis*, which it cannot have on the other, and seems to be quite decisive.

l *Let us eat*, &c.] This is the great argument urged to prove, that by the resurrection of the dead, St. Paul means a *future state.* But the true solution seems to be, that he writes all along upon a supposition, that if such proof as he had produced of Christ's resurrection, were not to be depended upon, we could have no certainty at all with respect to *any future* existence. And I must declare, that it seems to me, that the natural arguments of the immortality of the soul, and future retributions, do appear to carry with them great probability, notwithstanding all that Mr. Hallet has offered to invalidate them. Yet the degree of evidence is by no means comparable to that, which, admitting the truths of the facts alledged, the Corinthians must have had of Christ's resurrection, with which ours has so necessary a connection. And consequently, had these proofs been given up, what might have been pleaded in favour of the other, would probably have made very little impression.

of such a life, and another, that it is scarce worth while to make the distinction." SECT. XXIX.

33 Be not deceived: Evil communications corrupt good manners.

Be not deceived, brethren, but be upon your guard against such pernicious maxims and reasonings as these; and if you value either faith, or a good conscience, do not converse familiarly with those that teach them; for, as the poet Menander well expresses it, *Good manners are debauched by talk profane*[m]. 1 Cor. XV. 33.

34 Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.

Awake, therefore, *as becomes righteous* and good *men*[n], from the intoxications of such wild and delusive dreams as these; *and sin not* in supporting or countenancing doctrines, so subversive of the christian faith and hope; *for some are* still *ignorant of God*, and with the abused light of christianity know less of him than well-improved reason might teach them. *I say this to your shame*, considering how much you boast of your knowledge, which in this plain and important branch of it, appears so wretchedly deficient; while you cultivate so many vain subtilties, which tend rather to corrupt, than to exalt and perfect your minds. 34

IMPROVEMENT.

WELL may we rejoice, to see the doctrine of our own resurrection so closely connected in the sacred writings, and especially in this excellent discourse of St. Paul, with that of our blessed Redeemer; as that they should be declared to stand, or to fall together. *For Christ is assuredly risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that sleep.* He hath repaired, to all his spiritual seed, the damage that Adam brought upon his descendants; yea, he is become to them the author of a far nobler life, than the posterity of Adam lost by him. Ver. 12--16 20 21--23

Let us meditate with unutterable joy on the exaltation of our glorified Head, of our gracious Sovereign, who has conquered death himself, and will make us partakers of his victory. He hath received from his Father, glory, honour, and dominion; and *he shall reign* till his conquest be universal and complete, and till death be not only stripped of its trophies, but rendered subservient 24--26

m *Good manners are debauched.*] The *original* words of Menander are an *iambic verse*; I chose therefore to translate them thus, and it is very agreeable to the *Greek* in this connection, which seems to determine ομιλιαι κακαι, *to profane discourses.*

n *Awake, as becomes righteous men.*] As some read for δικαιως, δικαιοι, which gives rather a more forcible sense, I chose this rendering, which is a kind of medium between the two readings.

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servient to his triumphs; shall reign, till all his purposes for his Father's glory, and his own, be finally accomplished.

Ver. 27 But O, who can express the joy and glory of that day! when Christ shall *give up the kingdom to the Father*, and present unto him all his faithful subjects, transformed into his own image; a beautiful and splendid church indeed, for ever to be the object of the Divine complacence, for ever to dwell in the Divine presence, 28 in a state of the greatest nearness to God, who shall then *be all in all*. Well may the expectation of this illustrious period cheer the christian under his greatest extremities, and make him of all men the most happy, when otherwise, on account of his suffer- 29 ings in the flesh, he might seem *of all men the most miserable*. Well may this *his rejoicing in Christ Jesus*, that sacred oath, which this persecuted and distressed apostle, with so sublime a 31 spirit, here uses, encourage him to go on, though he be *daily dying;* 32--34 though he were daily to encounter the most *savage of mankind*, and death itself in its most dreadful forms. Well may this *knowledge of God*, of his gracious purposes, and of his exalted Son, *awaken us to righteousness;* well may it deliver us from the bondage of *sin*.

Let us retain these noble principles of doctrine and action, and guard against those *evil communications, those* sceptical and 33 licentious notions, which would *corrupt* our spirits, which would enervate every generous spark which the gospel kindles up into a flame, and by bounding our views within the narrow circle of *mortal life*, would degrade us from the anticipations of *angelical felicity*, to the pursuits of *brutal* gratification.

SECT. XXX.

The apostle answers objections against the resurrection, drawn from our not being able to conceive of the particular manner in which it shall be effected; and concludes with urging it, as a noble incentive to the greatest steadiness and zeal in religion. 1 Cor. XV. 35, *to the end.*

1 CORINTHIANS XV. 35.

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I HAVE thus endeavoured to confirm your faith, and establish your hope, in the great and glorious doctrine of a resurrection; *but some one will perhaps* be ready petulantly to object, 1 Cor. XV. 35. and *say, How are the dead raised up*, when their bodies are quite dissolved, and the particles, of which they consisted, scattered abroad, and perhaps become parts of other bodies? *and* if they are raised, *with what [kind of] bodies do they come*

1 COR. XV. 35.

BUT some *man* will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?

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1 Cor. XV. 35.

come out of their graves, and what alteration is made in their constitution, and organization, to fit them for a future life, in so many respects different from this?

36 Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die.

36 *Thou thoughtless creature,* who perhaps pridest thyself in the sagacity of this objection, as if it were some mighty effort of penetration, how easily mightest thou find an answer to it from what passes every day in the works of nature? *That seed which thou sowest* in thy field, *is not quickened* to new life and verdure, *except it* appear to *die*[a]: before it springs up to the future vegetable, whatever it be, it is macerated, decayed, and at length consumed in the earth.

37 And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other *grain:*

37 *And* [*as for*] *that which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body which shall be* produced from that seed which is committed to the ground, *but bare grain, perhaps of wheat, or of any other* kind of [*grain*], in which there is no appearance of root, or of stalk, of blade, or of ear.

38 But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.

38 *But God,* in the course of his natural operations, by certain laws of vegetation, with which thou art entirely unacquainted, *gives it a body as he pleases,* and such a variety of parts as he hath thought fit to determine for that particular species, *and to each of the seeds its own* proper *body*[b]: not only a body of the same sort, but that which by virtue of some connection it had with this or that individual grain, may properly be called its own, though in its form much different, and much more beautiful.

39 All flesh *is* not the same flesh: but *there is* one *kind of* flesh

39 There is an immense variety in the works of God, even in those which fall under the inspection of our senses, feeble and limited as they are, while we dwell in flesh and blood. *All flesh,* you know, *is not the same* kind of *flesh, but the flesh*

a *Except it die.*] To this it hath been *objected,* "that if the seed die, it never bears fruit." But it is certain, that the seed in general does consume away in the ground, though a little *germen,* or bud, which makes a part of it, springs up into new life, and is fed by the death and corruption of the rest. So that these wise philosophers of our own, talk just as foolishly as the *Corinthian free-thinkers,* whom they vindicate. See John xii. 24.

b *Its own* proper *body.*] The *apostle* seems more directly to speak of *that* as its proper body, which is peculiar to that *species* of grain; yet undoubtedly each ear has a peculiar reference to one individual, as its proper seed, in such a manner, as another of the same species has not; and what follows, plainly suits such a view.—God is said to *give it this body as he pleases,* because we know not how it is produced; and the *apostle's* leading thought is, "that it is absurd to argue against a resurrection on a principle which is so palpably false, as that must be, which supposes us to understand all the process of the Divine works."

c *Cattle*

SECT. XXX.

flesh of men, and of cattle[c], *of fishes, and of fowls, is different each from the other*, in its form, qualities, and manner of being subsisted.

flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, *and* another of birds.

1 Cor. XV. 40. [*There are*] *also celestial bodies, and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial, and the terrestrial, are* apparently *differeth*, and the brightest lustre the latter can have, is but a faint reflection of what is received from the former. And even in the glory of the celestial bodies

40 *There are* also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial *is* one, and the *glory* of the terrestrial *is* another.

41 there is also a wonderful variety: *There is one* superior and incomparable *glory of the sun*, which often shines with a lustre scarce to be endured; *and another* reflected and milder *glory of the moon; and another glory of the stars*, which as they appear to us, are far inferior to either of the two great luminaries. *And* again, [*one*] *star differeth from* [*another*] *star in glory*[d], according to their respective magnitudes, in reference to which they are ranged by astronomers under different classes.

41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from *another* star in glory.

42 *So* [*shall be*] *also the resurrection of the* pious *dead*[e]: another kind of glory shall appear, than human nature has known in its purest state, in any beauty of form, or ornaments of dress. There shall indeed, as I intimated but now, be some difference in the degree of that glory, correspondent to the different excellencies in the characters of good men, on whom it is to pass: but all shall experience a most illustrious and happy change; so that it may be said concerning the body of them all in general, *it is sown*, or committed, like seed to the ground, *in corruption*, just ready to putrify, and through various forms of putrefaction to be reduced to the dust: but *it is raised in incorruption*, so that no accident or disorder whatsoever shall be able to dissolve it again, or to threaten it in the least

42 So also *is* the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption:

43 degree. *It is sown in dishonour*, in a poor contemptible state, and under a kind of infamy, put upon it by the execution of God's first sentence

43 It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory:

c *Cattle.*] So κτηνων signifies; but it seems to be put for *beasts* in general.

d *And one star differeth,* &c.] It is in the *original* γαρ, that is, *for*; but I conclude, that *particle* is here used only as a *copulative*; else we must suppose the *apostle* to argue more philosophically than he probably intended, and to assert that the sun and moon were *stars*. He plainly speaks of the lustre which these celestial luminaries exhibit to us, not of what they have in themselves, without any regard to their aspects on us.

e *The resurrection of the* pious *dead.*] Of them it is evident the *apostle* here speaks, and not of the *dead* in general. Compare verses 23, 43, 40, and 57, with 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17, and verse 54.. St. Paul, (Phil. iii. 11,) and our Lord, (Matt. xxii. 30, Luke xx. 35,) mean the *same* thing by the resurrection.

glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power:

tence against sin: but *it is raised in glory*[f], every part and trace of the curse being abolished, and itself being formed in such a manner as to make it appear that the King of heaven delights to honour the happy spirit on which he bestows such a dress. *It is sown in weakness*, absolutely incapable of any, even the lowest degree of action, or sensation, and deprived of those limited abilities which it possessed in this its mortal life: but *it is raised in power*, endowed with almost angelic degrees of strength, vigour and activity. *It is sown an animal body*, formed to the purposes of animal life in this present world: but *it is raised a spiritual body*, formed to a noble superiority to the mean gratifications of this imperfect state, and fitted to be the instrument of the soul, in the most exalted services of the spiritual and Divine life. For it is certain, that as *there is an animal body*, with which we are now by daily, *and* frequently, by unhappy experience, acquainted; so *there is* also *a spiritual body:* God can exalt and refine matter to a degree of purity and excellence to us unknown; and there are many bodies now existing so pure and active, as that in comparison they may be called spirits. *And so it is written* with respect to the former, (Gen. ii. 7,) that *the first man Adam*, when God had breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, *was made a living soul*[g]; so that even in the original state of rectitude and felicity, in which man was created, he was made capable of, and fitted to, an animal life here upon earth: whereas the Lord Jesus Christ, who by virtue of the influence he has upon all his seed, as their spiritual Head, and great federal Representative, may well be called *the* second, or *latter Adam*, [*is*] *for an enlivening spirit*[h] to those who are united

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1 Cor. XV. 43.

44 It it sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

44

45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam *was made* a quickening spirit.

45

f *It is raised in glory.*] Some think this refers to the *garment of light* which the body shall put on at the resurrection; on which Dr. Whitby has a remarkable *note* here, (compare Matt. xvii. 2; Acts ix. 3; Rev. i. 14, 15; Dan. xii. 3; Wisd. iii. 7; Matt. xiii. 43; and Mark ix. 3,) and which he thinks remarkably to illustrate the matter *ex adverso*.

g *Made a living soul.*] This is a quotation from Moses; and there seems to be a peculiar *emphasis* in the *original*, which I know not how to preserve in the *translation*, in the reference of ψυχη to ψυχικον, in the former verse, as distinguished from πνευματικον; and refers to such a difference between ψυχη, the *animal soul*, and πνευμα, the *rational spirit*, as is more clearly expressed, (1 Thess. v. 23,) and is also very agreeable to the import of נפש חיה, the word which Moses uses.

h *The second—an enlivening spirit.*] This is not a *quotation* from *scripture*, as some have thought, but what the *apostle* adds on occasion of the *quotation* brought above; as if he had said, Christ is the last Adam, as an illustrious antitype of the first, (Rom. v. 14; and he hath in himself

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united to him, and will not only purify their souls by the operation of his Spirit communicated to them, but at last spiritualize their very bodies. *Nevertheless, the spiritual* Adam [*was*] *not first, but the animal, and afterward the spiritual;* and as the first Adam existed before Christ was sent to become our Saviour, so must we first wear that animal body which we derive from the one, before we put on that spiritual body which we derive from the other. *The first man* [*was*] *from the earth,* and so *earthy:* he was created out of the dust of the earth, and his body was only a mass of animated clay, in reference to which it was said, Dust thou art, (Gen. iii. 19;) *the second man,* of whom we speak, [*is*] *the Lord from heaven:* he came originally from the heavenly world, to which he is returned; and whatever of earth there was in the composition of the body he condescended to wear, it is now completely purified and refined into the most glorious form. And *such as the earthy* [*was, are*] *they also that are earthy:* they all descended from him, and have no higher original, are mean, mortal, corruptible creatures; *and such as the heavenly* [*is, are*] *they also that are heavenly:* they who are, as it were, born of Christ by the regenerating influences of his Spirit, and therefore are to live with him in heaven, shall at last have such glorious bodies as he hath. *And* it is delightful beyond all expression, to think of it with self-application, that *as we* in particular *have borne,* and do now bear, *the image of the earthy;* as assuredly as we are now sinful, afflicted, and mortal men, like the first Adam: so surely *shall we also bear the image of the heavenly;* so surely shall we be brought to resemble Christ in purity, glory, and immortality.

But when I spake of bearing the image of the earthy Adam in mortality, I would not be understood as asserting, that every one of the descendants of Adam shall, in fact, go through these pangs of death, and that dissolution in the grave, which Adam has experienced. *This I say, brethren,* I affirm it as a constant and important

1 Cor. XV. 46.

46 Howbeit, that *was* not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.

47 The first man *is* of the earth, earthy: the second man *is* the Lord from heaven.

48 As *is* the earthy, such *are* they also that are earthy: and as *is* the heavenly, such *are* they also that are heavenly.

49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the

self a *spirit,* with which he quickeneth whom he pleases, and in what degree he pleases, John i. 4; and verse 21, 26. The words *living,* and *enlivening,* have such a correspondence to each other, as ζωσαν, and ζωοποιων I therefore preferred the latter of them to *quickening,* though the sense be entirely the same.

the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

portant truth, *that flesh and blood*, such weak and crazy systems of it, as those in which we now lodge, *cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth* a body impregnated with the seeds of *corruption inherit incorruption:* it is utterly unfit for the pure etherial regions of the blessed, and indeed incapable of subsisting in them. SECT. XXX. 1 Cor. XV. 50.

51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

This is universally true; yet *behold! I tell you* 51 *a mystery*, that is, a doctrine hitherto unknown, and which you cannot now be able fully to comprehend: for *we* Christians *shall not all sleep*, shall not all submit to the stroke of death, so that our bodies should all lie mouldering in the grave, which is their general doom; *but we shall all*, the living as well as the dead, at the appearance of Christ to the final judgment, *be changed* in a most glorious and happy manner into the image of our descending Lord. And 52 this change, great and illustrious as it is, the Divine power shall effect in less time than we have been speaking of it: for it shall pass *in a moment*, in an imperceptible point of time, and even *in the twinkling of an eye*, just *at* the instant when *the last trumpet* is blown by the Divine command, to awaken all the millions of saints who are sleeping in the dust: *for the trumpet shall* then *sound*, the voice of the archangel, and attending celestial legions, shall fill the whole earth and heaven with an astonishing noise, *and the dead shall* immediately, as upon its summons, *be raised incorruptible, and we*, that is, those of us Christians who are living, *shall be changed*[i], as Enoch and Elijah were in the day of their translation: that body, which but a moment before appeared just as ours now do, shall, quick as thought, be transformed into an image of that worn by our triumphant Lord, and fitted for all the most active services, and all the purest sensations and delights of the celestial state. *For* in order to that, as I have just ob- 53 served, *it is necessary, that this corruptible put on incorruption, and* that *this mortal put on immortality*, so as to be no longer subject to diseases or

52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump. For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality.

i *We*, that is, those of us Christians who are living, *shall be changed.*] As the phrase will admit of the looser sense the *paraphrase* gives, I cannot allow of the argument drawn from hence, to prove, either that the *apostle* expected he should live till Christ appeared to judgment, or that he should be raised from the dead, and *continue upon earth* some time before that great event happened: Though I confess, the argument which Mr. Fleming draws from hence, in favour of the last of these opinions, is very plausible. Compare 1 Thess. iv. 15.

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1 Cor. XV. 54.

or death. *But* when this glorious and long-expected event shall be accomplished, *when this corruptible* part of our frame *shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall the saying be brought to pass, which is written,* (Isa. xxv. 8.) *Death is swallowed up in victory,* and perfectly subdued and destroyed, and so happy a state introduced, that it would not be known, that death had ever had any place or power among Christ's subjects at all: And in the assured view of this, may the Christian, even now, with the greatest pleasure take up his song of triumph; *Where [is] thy* pointed and destructive *sting, O death? Where [is] thy victory, O grave*[k]*?* How little hurt canst thou do me? For how little a while shalt thou be able to triumph over me? *The very sting* and torture *of death,* that which arms it with its greatest terrors, [*is*] the consideration of its being the punishment of *sin,* and consequently its foreboding future misery, as the effect of the Divine displeasure; *and the power of sin,* that which constitutes its malignity, and gives it these killing weapons, [*is,*] that it is a transgression of *the* Divine *law: But thanks [be] to God, who* in his infinite mercy hath taken away the sting and terror of death, and *giveth us* the prospects and *the* joys of a complete *victory* over it, by the displays of his pardoning grace, *through our Lord Jesus Christ.* May we ever remain under those grateful impressions that suit so important an obligation!

54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory?

56 The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law.

57 But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58 *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye fixed* on this as the great foundation of your souls, and *immoveable* in your regards to it, though strongly borne and pressed upon, by a variety of temptations and dangers; be *abounding always in the work of the Lord,* in every service you are capable of performing, which may be acceptable to this your great and compassionate Redeemer; as well *knowing, that your labour in the* service of such a *Lord is not,* on the whole, *in*

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

k *Where is thy sting, &c.*] The *original* has a kind of *poetical turn,* which seems in some measure to suit the sublimity of the sentiment; for the first of the clauses is an *Ionic,* and the second, a *trochaic verse,* Πυ συ, θανατε, το κεντρον; πυ συ, αδη, το νικος; and Mr. Pope has only transposed them to make them, as they stand in our *version,* the conclusion of one of his *stanzas; O grave, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?* It is generally thought, that these words are borrowed from Hos. xiii. 10. 14, which we render, "*O death, I will be thy plague,* &c." and some urge that אתן has been read for אית; but I do not see there is any *certain* evidence that the *apostle* intended any quotation at all.

in vain; but that whatsoever you may at present suffer for his sake, you shall receive a most glorious reward, in that happy day of the resurrection, concerning which I have been speaking so largely. SECT. XXX. 1 Cor. XV. 58.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us learn from this incomparable discourse of the *apostle* to curb that vain curiosity which is so ready in matters of Divine revelation, to break out into an unbecoming petulance; and where we are sure, that God declares *the thing*, let us leave it to him to overcome every difficulty that may seem to attend *the manner* in which it shall be effected. Nothing may be more useful, in order to the conquering such a weakness, than to observe the operations of God in the works of nature, where *he gives to every seed*, whether animal or vegetable, *such a body as shall please him*. Each is proper for its sphere, and beautiful in its connection and order, though the *degree of their glory be* different. And thus all the diversity of *glory*, which shall at last be apparent among the *children of God*, even *the children of the resurrection*, shall serve to illustrate the Divine wisdom, and goodness, and faithfulness. Ver. 35, 38, 39, 40

The alterations made in every instance, will indeed be wonderful, *when this mortal puts on immortality, and this corruptible puts on incorruption.* Let us for ever adore the Divine goodness, that when, by our relation to the *first Adam*, we were under a sentence of condemnation and death, he was pleased in his infinite mercy to appoint, that we should stand related to Christ, as the *second Adam*, in so happy a bond, that by him we might recover what we had lost in the former; yea and far more: so that, *as we have borne the image of the earthy, we might as surely bear the image of the heavenly.* O let us earnestly aspire after this blessedness; and remember, that our bearing the image of his holiness, is inseparably connected with the hope of so glorious a privilege! 53, 47, &c., 49

Let us endeavour, therefore, by cultivating holiness in all its branches, to maintain this hope in all its spirit and energy; longing for that glorious day, when in the utmost extent of the prophetic expression, *Death shall be swallowed up in victory*, and millions of voices, after the long silence of the grave, shall burst out at once into that triumphant song, *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?* And when we see death disarmed, and the terrors of the *law* silenced, let *us bless* God for *Jesus Christ*, by whom the precepts of the law were perfectly fulfilled, and its 54, 55, 56, 57

SECT. XXX. penalty endured; that so we might not only be delivered from the curse, but called to inherit the blessing. Let it be considered, a
Ver. 18, 19 an engagement to universal obedience; and in the assurance, that
58 whatever other *labours* may be frustrated, *those in the Lord shall never be vain*, let gratitude, and interest, concur to render us *stedfast, immoveable, and continually active in his service.*

SECT. XXXI.

The Apostle gives some advices, relating to the proposed collection for the poor saints in Judea. 1 Cor. XVI. 1—12.

1 CORINTHIANS XVI. 1.

SECT. XXXI. BEFORE I conclude this epistle, I must add a word or two *concerning the collection* which
1 Cor. XVI. 1. you propose making *for the* poor *saints* which are in Judea, who are in such great straits, both on account of the famine and the persecution to which they are exposed. And here I would only say this: *as I have given it in charge to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye* proceed: for nothing occurs to my thoughts at present, which can be more subservient to that generous
2 and good design. When you hold your Christian assemblies *on the first day of the week*[a], in commemoration of the resurrection of our Lord, which has made that day sacred amongst us, *let every one of you lay something by, in proportion to the degree in which*, by the Divine blessing, *he hath been prospered* in his affairs; and let him bring it with him to the place where you meet for your public worship; then *treasuring it up*[b] in the common stock, *that so* it may be ready in one sum, and *there may be no* necessity of making any particular *collections when I come.* This will save us some trouble, at a time when we shall necessarily have so much important business on our hands; and when a little is added to the stock weekly, it may rise by almost imperceptible degrees, to a greater sum than could perhaps be expected if the whole were

1 COR. XVI. 1. NOW concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.

2 Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

a *On the first day of the week.*] So κατα μιαν σαββατων signifies. Compare Luke xxiv. 1; John xx. 1; with Matt. xxviii. 1; Mark xvi. 2.

b *Treasuring it up: εκαστος παρ' εαυτω τιθετω θησαυριζων.*] We render it, *let every one of you lay by him in store.* But the following words shew, that it was to be put into a common stock. The argument drawn from hence for the religious observation of the first day of the week in these primitive churches of Corinth, and Galatia, is too obvious to need any farther illustration, and yet too important to be passed by in an entire silence.

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1 Cor. XVI. 3.

3 And when I come whomsoever you shall approve by *your* letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.

were to be deposited at once. *But when I am arrived at* Corinth, *whomsoever ye shall* appoint and *recommend by* your *letters*; signed by the congregation, or its proper representatives; *them will I send, to carry your favour to Jerusalem,* and shall cheerfully instruct them to deliver it with their own hands to the poor Christians there.

4 And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me.

And if it be thought *convenient, that I shall also go* up thither myself on this occasion, *they shall go with me;* that every thing may be conducted in the most open and honourable manner, and that your messengers may witness for me, that none of the money has been employed to any purposes whatsoever, different from those from which it was given.

5 Now I will come unto you, when I shall pass through Macedonia: (for I do pass through Macedonia.)

6 And it may be that I will abide; yea, and winter with you, that ye may bring me on my journey, whithersoever I go.

This I hope, will quickly be dispatched; *for I will,* if Providence permit, *come to you when I have passed through Macedonia; and I am just upon my journey through Macedonia*[c]; *And* then *perhaps may continue awhile* with you, *and* even *spend the winter with you; that* so, when I have made you as long a visit as my affairs will admit, *you may bring me forward on my journey* to Jerusalem, or *whithersoever* else *I* shall *go*[d], or through whatever parts I may pass to it; for that is a circumstance about which I am not yet determined, and in which I refer myself to the future direction of Providence.

7 For I will not see you now by the way; but I trust to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit.

I speak of my coming as at some distance; *for* though from these maritime parts I might easily come to you by sea, and so travel northward, when I have dispatched my business at Corinth; *I will not now see you* in this manner, *in my way; but hope* the little delay which this scheme may occasion, will be made up to your satisfaction: for I fully purpose *to spend some time with you, if the Lord permit;* which the necessities of the churches of Macedonia will not at present give me leave to do.

8 But I will tarry at Ephesus

But I shall continue here *at Ephesus till* about *pentecost*

c *I am just upon my journey through Macedonia.*] Thus, I think, we may justly render, Μακεδονιαν γαρ διερχομαι. Macedonia was not the direct way from Ephesus to Corinth. It seems by his second *epistle* to the Corinthians, written a few months after this, that he was either in Macedonia, or on his way thither, (compare 2 Cor. i. 16.) from whence it appears, that he had a secret purpose of seeing Corinth in his way to, as well as from Macedonia, but he does not express this purpose here, so that we know not how it was signified to them, as from the *text* last mentioned it seems that it was.

d *Whithersoever* else *I go.*] In the forecited *text*, Judea is mentioned; but St. Paul does not seem to have fixed his scheme so particularly, as yet.

e *I shall*

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pentecost [e], reserving the remainder of the summer for my tour through Macedonia, and the neighbouring parts. In the mean time, though I have spent so many months here, I am willing to make my stay as long, as with any tolerable convenience I can; *for a great and effectual door* of usefulness *is opened to me* under my apostolical character, in this populous and celebrated city, *and* [*there are*] *many opposers*, who may perhaps take the advantage of my absence, to injure this new-planted church on which I have bestowed so much labour, and for the interest of which I have the tenderest concern [f].

Ephesus until pentecost.

1 Cor. XVI. 9.

9 For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and *there are* many adversaries.

10 · *But if* in the mean time, my beloved friend and brother *Timothy* should *come* to you, *see that he be with you without fear* of any unkind usage, or of any attempt to set him up as the head of a party; as in some instances you have been ready to do by others; *for* as *he* is a man of a very tender and affectionate, so he is likewise of a very candid and humble spirit, and he *laboureth in the work of the Lord* Jesus Christ with great sincerity and zeal; *as I also* [*do*;] and we are in all respects so much in the same sentiments, that I am well assured, the things which would grieve me in your conduct, would be equally disagreeable to him. And *therefore*, though he be yet but a young man, (1 Tim. iv. 12,) *let no man despise* or make light of *him*; *but* on the contrary, *bring him forward on his journey in peace*, and do all that you can to make it commodious and agreeable to him; *that* so *he may come to me* at Ephesus, as soon as possible: *for I expect him* here *with the* other *brethren* [g], who

10 Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also *do*.

11 Let no man therefore despise him: but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren.

[e] *I shall continue at Ephesus till pentecost.*] I look upon this as a very plain intimation, that he was now at Ephesus; and consequently, that the inscription added at the end of this *epistle*, which tells us *it was written from Philippi*, is very far from being authentic, and I hope it will be remembered, that no credit is to be given to any of these additions, which have been very presumptuously made, and I think very imprudently retained.

[f] *A great and effectual door is opened*, &c.] Some think that here is an allusion to the *door of the Circus*, from whence chariots were let out when the races were to begin; and that the word ἀντικείμενοι, which I render *opposers*, signifies the same with *antagonists*, with whom *the apostle* was *to contend, as in a course*. (Acts xix. 20, &c.) This opposition rendered his presence more necessary, to preserve those that were already converted, and to increase the number, if God should bless his *ministry*. Accordingly a celebrated church was planted at Ephesus; and so far as we can learn from the tenor of his *epistle* to it, there was less to correct and reprove among them, than in most of the other churches to which he wrote.

[g] *I expect him* here *with the brethren.*] The original words are something ambiguous; but I have taken the sense which seemed most natural. Accordingly I think it probable, that he came to Ephesus before St. Paul was driven out of it by the tumult; and that the *apostle* being obliged to leave that city in so abrupt a manner, desired Timothy to stay a while after

who are now the companions of his journey, and who are all dear to me in the bonds of christian love.

1 Cor. XVI. 12.

12 As touching *our* brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you, with the brethren; but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have convenient time.

But *as for* [*our*] *brother Apollos*, who is so well known to you, and for whom many of you have so high a regard, I am sorry to tell you, that you are not at present to expect a visit from him. *I was* indeed *very importunate with him to come to you with* Timothy, and *the* other *brethren;* as I have an entire confidence, both in his friendship and prudence, and hoped, that whatever improper use has been made of his name in opposition to mine, (compare chap. i. 12, chap. iii. 4—6, his presence among you might have been useful, just at this crisis. *Nevertheless, he was by no means willing to come now*, lest any advantage should be taken from that circumstance to inflame those divisions he would gladly do his utmost to allay; *but he will come when he shall have a convenient opportunity;* and you may assure yourselves, that he retains a most cordial affection for you, and tender solicitude for your peace and prosperity.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET *ministers*, from the example of the apostle, learn to be ready to promote charitable *collections for the relief of poor Christians;* and let them frequently exhort their hearers to do good, and to communicate; reminding them, that their contributions ought to bear *a proportion to the degree in which God has been pleased to prosper them.*—We see an evident reference to the stated assemblies of the church *on the first day of the week* in this early age; and it is a proper duty of that day to devise and execute liberal things, according to our respective abilities. Ver. 1, 2

The prudent caution of St. Paul, as to the management of *pecuniary* affairs, is worthy the attention of the *ministers* of the *gospel;* and may teach them to take care, not only that they satisfy their own consciences, in the fidelity of their transactions; but also, that they *provide things honest in the sight of all men.* The apostle's courage, in making the opposition he met with at Ephesus a reason for his continuance there, may instruct us not to study our own ease, in the choice of our abode; but rather to prefer those circumstances, however disagreeable in themselves, wherein we may be providentially led to do most, for the advancement of religion in the world. 3, 4, 8

His

after him, to settle the affairs of that important church more completely than he had an opportunity of doing it, 1 Tim. i. 3.

SECT. XXXI.

His care, that his young friend Timothy might be *as easy as possible*, constitutes likewise a very amiable part of his character; and suggests, in a manner well worthy of notice, how careful
Ver. 10, 11 private Christians should be, that they do not terrify and distress the minds of those who are entering on the ministerial office. A faithful disposition to *labour in the work of the Lord*, ought to command respect; yet sometimes, as in the instance of Apollos, even that diligence may be so liable to misrepresentation, that it
12 may be the wisdom of *ministers to absent themselves* from places where they have many to caress and admire them. On the whole, the great business of life is to glorify God, in doing our best for promoting the happiness of mankind; and no self-denial ought to seem hard to us, while we keep that glorious end in view.

SECT. XXXII.

The apostle concludes with some particular salutations, and directions; with general exhortations to courage and love, a solemn benediction to true Christians, and an awful denunciation against those that were destitute of love to Christ. 1 Cor. XVI. 13, *to the end.*

1 CORINTHIANS XVI. 13.

SECT. XXXII.

NOW, my brethren, to conclude all, suffer a word of the most affectionate exhortation.
1 Cor. XVI. 13 Remember the situation in which you are, and with how many formidable enemies you are surrounded; and *be watchful* against all their assaults; *stand fast in the* profession of the christian *faith; acquit yourselves* not *like* children, but as *men* of knowledge and fortitude: and *be strong*[a] in dependance on the best supports,
14 while you make that your constant care. And that you may not mistake this exhortation, as breathing any thing of a contentious spirit, or fitted only for persons in military life, I would subjoin this necessary caution; *let all your affairs be transacted in* mutual *love*, and under the influence of that noble principle of unfeigned benevolence which I have been so largely describing and recommending in the former part of this epistle. (See chap. xiii.)

1 COR. XVI. 13.

WATCH ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.

14 Let all your things be done with charity.

And

a *Stand fast— acquit yourselves like men, be strong.*] There is no need of seeking a different sense of each word. If there be any difference, ανδριζεσθε may refer to a *strength of resolution*; κραταιουσθε to that *cheerful and courageous expectation* of a happy event, which the consciousness of so good a cause would naturally administer.

b *They*

15 I beseech you brethren (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first-fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,)

And I farther *beseech you*, my *brethren*, that for as much *as ye know the household of Stephanas, that it is the first fruits of Achaia*, he, and they, being among the first that were converted to Christianity in all your country, ye pay a proper regard to them; *and* so much the rather, *as they have set themselves* with peculiar resolution and care, according to the rank in which Providence has placed them, and the abilities which God hath given them, *to* the labour and charge of *ministring to the saints*[b]. Now I would by all means inculcate it upon you, *that you* should, in your respective ranks and circumstances of life, *subject yourselves to such, and* not only pay them all due personal regard, but act as you have opportunity, in harmony with them; and that under their influence you should do your utmost for the good of your Christian brethren. And thus I would have you behave *to every associate in that* good *work and labour* in which they are engaged; especially to those who are honoured with the ministerial office.

SECT. XXXII.

1 Cor. XVI. 15.

16 That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with *us* and laboureth.

16

17 I am glad of the coming of Stephanas, and Fortunatus, and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part, they have supplied.

I could not but *rejoice* greatly *at the arrival* and presence *of* that worthy person I have just mentioned, that is *Stephanas, and* of *Fortunatus*[c], *and Achaicus*, who accompanied him; *because they filled up your deficiency* with respect to me, and gave me by their converse and friendly offices, that consolation which I might justly have expected from you all, had I enjoyed an opportunity of conversing with you, and about which I could, for your own sakes, wish that some of you had been more solicitous. *For they refreshed my spirit* greatly by their obliging behaviour, *and* edifying conversation; as I doubt not but they have often refreshed *yours* by their ministrations among you. *Therefore* I must again urge it upon you, that you *pay all proper regard to such*, and treat them on every occasion, with such respect and affection as so worthy a character well deserves.

17

18 For they have refreshed my spirit and yours: therefore acknowledge ye them that are such.

18

19 The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you

I must now tell you, that *the churches of* the provincial *Asia*, which lie about Ephesus, and with whom I have frequent opportunities of cor-

19

b *They have set themselves*, &c.] This seems to imply, that it was the generous care of the *whole* family to assist their fellow-Christians; so that there was not a member of it which did not do its part.

c *Fortunatus*.] This worthy man survived St. Paul a considerable time; for it appears from the *epistle* of Clement to the Corinthians, (§ 59,) that he was the messenger of the Church at Corinth to that of Rome, by whom Clement sent back that invaluable *epistle*.

SECT. XXXII.

corresponding, *salute you* with all Christian affection; heartily wishing you peace and prosperity. Your good friends, *Aquila and Priscilla*[d], who have made so long an abode among you, and are now providentially brought hither, *most affectionately salute you in the* bowels of our common *Lord*. And *with* these tokens of respect receive those of *the church in their house*, as you know their family is happy in a large number of Christian members. But I will not enter into a more particular detail of names; for your society is so celebrated, and esteemed of so great importance to the Christian interest, that I may truly say, that *all the brethren salute you*. Entertain therefore that affection for each other, which those that are almost strangers bear to you, and *salute one another with an holy kiss*; but let it be as cordially sincere as I doubt not but it will be decent.

1 Cor. XVI. 19. you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.

20 All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss.

21 I have hitherto used the assistance of a friend, to write what I dictated to him; but in order to assure you that this epistle is genuine, I here add *the salutation of* [*me*] *Paul*, your well known minister, and father in the gospel, *with my own hand*; most cordially wishing you every blessing, both temporal and spiritual. And let me here add, (that being thus written with my own pen, it may have the greater weight;) *If* there be *any man* amongst you, or elsewhere, who under the specious forms of Christianity, *loveth not the Lord Jesus Christ* in sincerity, but maintains a secret alienation of heart from him while he calls himself his servant, preferring any interest of his own to that of his Divine Master; *let him be Anathema Maran-atha*[e]: such an one is indeed worthy

21 The salutation of *me* Paul with mine own hand.

22 If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ,

d *Aquila and Priscilla.*] They had formerly made some abode at Corinth; and there St. Paul's acquaintance with them commenced. Acts xviii. 1, 2. It is therefore no wonder they were particular in their salutations.—Some copies add, παρ' οις ξενιζομαι, *with whom also I lodge*, but the authority of those *manuscripts* is small.

e *Anathema—Maran-atha.*] Among the various interpretations of these words, none seems to me so probable and satisfactory as this—when the Jews lost the power of life and death, they used nevertheless to pronounce an *anathema* on persons who according to the *Mosaic law*, should have been executed; and such a person became an *anathema*, or *cherem*, or *accursed*; for the expressions are equivalent. They had a full persuasion, that the curse would not be in vain; and indeed it appears they expected some judgment, correspondent to that which the *law* pronounced, would befal the offender; for instance, that a man to be stoned, would be killed by the falling of a stone or other heavy body upon him; a man to be strangled, would be choaked; or one whom the law sentenced to the flames, would be burnt in his house, and the like. Now to express their faith, that God would one way or another, and probably in some remarkable manner *interpose*, to add that efficacy to his own sentence which they could not give it; it is very probable they might

Christ, let him be Anathema, Maran-atha.

worthy of the most dreadful curse, and if he persist in such a wretched temper, it will certainly fall upon him. And let him be assured, that though his crime be of such a nature as not to admit human conviction and censure; yet it is known to him whose eyes are as a flame of fire, so that he searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins. And ere long, the Lord himself will come in awful pomp, to execute vengeance upon him, pronouncing him accursed before the assembled world, and devoting him to utter and everlasting destruction.

SECT. XXXII.

1 Cor. XVI. 22.

23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you.

But it is my hearty prayer, that no such root of bitterness and heir of misery may be found among you; and that it may not, may *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ [be] with you*, and all the blessed tokens and effects of his favour rest upon you, for time and eternity! 23

24 My love *be* with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Be assured, that in what I have here said, I intend nothing in the least unkind to any single person among you. Far from that, *my* tenderest and most affectionate *love [be] with you all in Christ Jesus*[f]; depend therefore upon my constant readiness to do all in my power, for promoting and establishing the Christian interest among you: and may it flourish more and more, till your happiness be completed in the kingdom of God above. *Amen.* 24

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 13

However the particular trials of *Christians* may vary in different ages, the same works in general demand their *diligence:* the same enemies, their *watchfulness;* the same difficulties, their *courage*

might use the words, *Maran-atha*, that is, in *Syriac, the Lord cometh*, or he will surely and quickly come to put this sentence in execution, and to shew, that the person on whom it falls, is indeed *anathema, accursed.* In beautiful *allusion* to this, when the *apostle* was speaking of a secret alienation from Christ, maintained under the forms of Christianity, (which might perhaps be the case among many of the Corinthians, and much more probably may be so among us,) as this was not a crime capable of being convicted and censured in the *Christian church*, he reminds them, that the *Lord Jesus Christ will come* at length, and find it out, and punish it in a proper manner. This *weighty* sentence the *apostle* chose to write *with his own hand*, and insert between his general salutation and benediction, that it might be the more attentively regarded. Compare *Grot.* on Rom. v. 13; and Isa. xiv. 20. Bishop *Patrick* on Deut. xxvii. 15.

f *My love [be] with you all in Christ Jesus.*] When we consider, what an alienation of affection some of these Corinthians had expressed, with respect to the *apostle*, this expression of tender regard to them *all* without any exception, is so much the more affectionate; but it would not have been agreeable to the generous spirit which dictated it, to have glanced too plainly on that circumstance in the *paraphrase.*

SECT. XXXII.

rage and fortitude: nor will they ever be more likely to perform, to resist, and to endure well, than when *charity* reigns in their
14 hearts, and presides over the whole of their behaviour.

We owe our humble thanks to the author of all good, when he
15, 16 raises up the spirits of his servants to any distinguished activity and zeal in his cause. *Christians* of standing superior to their brethren, ought to emulate such a character; and when they do so with genuine marks of becoming modesty and upright views, let all *proper respect* be paid to them: especially to those who are honoured with, and labour faithfully in, the *ministerial* office. To such let others *submit themselves in love;* not indeed, as to *the lords of their faith*, which even the *apostles* pretended not to be; but as friends, whom they esteem and reverence, ever tenderly solicitous to secure their comfort, and increase their usefulness.

We see, how much the *apostle* was concerned to promote mutual
19, 20 *friendship* among the disciples of our blessed *Redeemer*: how kindly he delivers the *salutations* of one, and another. It becomes us to remember each other with cordial regard; and in imitation of this wise example, to do all we can to cultivate a good understanding among our *Christian* brethren; and to abhor that disposition *to sow discord*, which has been so fatally successful in producing *envyings, and strife, and every evil work.*

To conclude all; let us lay up in our memory, and often review, this awful sentence, this *Anathema—Maran-atha*, which,
22 to give it the greater weight, the *apostle* records *with his own hand.*
21 Let it ever be remembered, that professing *Christians*, who do not sincerely love their master, lie under the heaviest curse which an *apostle* can pronounce, or a God inflict. Let the unhappy creatures take the alarm, and labour to obtain a more ingenuous temper, ere *the Lord*, whom they neglect, and against whom they entertain a secret enmity, descend from heaven with unsupportable terror, and pronounce the *anathema* with his own lips, in circumstances which shall for ever cut off all hope and all possibility of its being reversed. If his solemn voice pronounce, his almighty hand will immediately execute it. *How will they be cast down to destruction, as in a moment! How will they be utterly consumed with terrors!* To
23 prevent so dreadful an end of our high profession, of our towering hopes, *may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us. Amen.*

THE END OF THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR ON THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR,

A PARAPHRASE

ON

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO THE

CORINTHIANS.

WITH

CRITICAL NOTES, AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.

A

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

THE first epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians was written, as hath been before observed, from Ephesus about the year of our Lord 57; towards the end of his continuance there, and in the neighbouring parts. (See Vol. VIII. sect. 44. *note* [a].) Upon leaving Ephesus, the apostle removed to Troas, which was situated on the shore of the Ægean sea, in expectation of meeting Titus, and receiving an account of the success with which he hoped his former epistle had been attended, and of the present state of the Corinthian church; (2 Cor. ii. 12.) But not meeting him there, (ver. 13,) he proceeded to Macedonia, where he obtained his desired interview, and received satisfaction concerning the promising state of affairs at Corinth. From this place the *apostle* wrote his *second epistle* to the Corinthians, intrusting it to the care of Titus, who was returning to Corinth to forward the collection intended for the poor Christians in Judea. From these historical circumstances, the date of this second epistle must be fixed within a year after the former. (See Vol. VIII. sect. 45. *note* [b].)

In the introduction to the first epistle we observed, that its *design* was to rectify some sad *disorders* and *abuses* which had crept into the church of Corinth; and answer their queries upon some important points, in which they had desired his determination. The intention of the present epistle is, in general, to illustrate some of the same points upon which he had discoursed in the former, according to the light which Titus had given him into the circumstances and temper of the Corinthian church; interspersing and inforcing some occasional reflections and advices upon various

various subjects, as he thought most conducive to their instruction and edification.

But to give a more distinct view of the scheme and contents of this *second* epistle—The *apostle*, after a general salutation, expresses his grateful sense of the Divine goodness, in preserving him from the dangers to which he had been exposed in Asia; professing his unshaken confidence in God's continued guardianship, supported by a sense of his own integrity; (chap. i. 1—12.) Which declarations of his integrity he further illustrates; applying it particularly to those views on which he had declined the visit to Corinth, which in the former epistle he seems to have promised, (ver. 13, *to the end.)* The case of the unhappy person, who had committed incest with his father's wife, and whom upon account of the scandal he had brought on his Christian profession, the apostle directed them to exclude from communion, had made a deep impression on his mind: This, he intimates, was the reason of his having deferred his visit to Corinth; that he might not meet them with grief, nor till he had received advice of the effect of his apostolical admonitions, and their salutary and seasonable discipline. The affection of the *apostle* to the Corinthians is here manifested, both in his sympathy with the offending member of their church while under censure, whom now, being penitent, he advises them to re-admit to their communion; and also in his solicitude for certain tidings concerning their welfare by Titus, whom not finding at Troas, as before observed, he went to meet in Macedonia, (chap. ii. 1—15.)

In further vindication and support of his apostolical character against the insinuations and objections of the false teachers at Corinth, the apostle, having just intimated that a large door of success had been opened to him at Troas, and elsewhere, makes a transition to this subject; and expresses in the most affectionate terms his thanksgiving to God for having intrusted him with the ministry of the gospel, and for the success attending his services; declaring his lively confidence in all events, of the Divine acceptance, and speaking of the Corinthians as his credentials, written by the finger of God, (ver. 14, *to the end.* chap. iii. 1—6.) And as an illustration of the dignity of the ministerial office, he descants in a very pertinent and judicious manner, on the comparative obscurity of the Mosaic law, and the superior glory and permanence of the gospel, ver. 7, *to the end.)* He then disclaims all sinister views, and distrust of success, in pursuing the glorious ministry he had described, from a firm persuasion that such a gospel could not be rejected, but in consequence of the most fatal prejudices, (chap. iv. 1—6.) And while he acknowledges his own infirmities, he glories in the strength communicated to him from God, as an effectual support under the extremest trials: (ver. 7—15;) Describing the glorious hopes which he entertained beyond the grave, as a ground of triumph in the face of danger, and a noble incentive to persevering fidelity and stedfastness, (ver. 16, *to the end*, chap. v. 1—10.) Touching again upon the ardour with which

which he prosecuted the gospel-ministry, he makes a kind of apology for it, pleading the irresistible constraints of the Redeemer's love, and the infinite importance of the overtures of reconciliation; which in a most pathetic address he urges the Corinthians to embrace ; (ver. 11, *to the end*, chap. vi. 1, 2 ;) And then expatiates with great copiousness on the temper with which, in the midst of afflictions and persecutions, he and his brethren executed their important embassy, (ver. 3—10.)

It is easy to observe, on the most cursory view of this argument, with what delicacy, as well as energy, it is all along conducted. As the *apostle* manages his subject in the tenderest and most affectionate manner, and intermingles general reflections for the instruction and consolation of the Corinthians ; which however had an evident subservience to his main design ; he conciliates their regard, and fixes the impressions which his former epistle had made, in a more insinuating and therefore more effectual way, than if he had exerted his authority, and wrote with more closeness and severity of stile. And having been informed by Titus, that the defence of his mission, and apology for his conduct, contained in his former epistle, had not been utterly in vain, he manifests his satisfaction in the present disposition of the Corinthians, by giving his reasonings upon this head a more diffusive and practical turn.

After this, the epistle affords us a further instance of his affection, in his judicious and pathetic exhortation to the Corinthians, (additional to what he had formerly said, when they desired his opinion upon the head of *marriage,)* to avoid those alliances or *intermarriages* with idolaters, which might tend to ensnare them ; pleading the gracious promises of God to his people, as an engagement to the strictest purity, and as a motive to aspire after the sublimest attainments in religion. (ver. 11, *to the end.* chap. vii. 1.

From this digression he returns to the subject he had before been treating ; and to remove any degree of prejudice which might yet lurk in their breasts against his apostolical character, he appeals to them for the integrity and disinterestedness of his conduct ; professing that the freedom he uses, was not intended to reproach their diffidence, but sprung from an unfeigned and ardent concern for their welfare ; which he illustrates by the pleasure with which he received the assurances of their good state by Titus, and the part he had taken in their sorrows, which his necessary reproofs had occasioned, and by his present joy, in that those sorrows had happily issued in their reformation. (ver. 2, *to the end.*)

The apostle had proposed to the Corinthians, in the close of the former epistle, their making a contribution for the relief of the poor saints in Judea : resuming the subject, he recommends to them the example of the Macedonians, reminds them of the grace of our blessed Redeemer, and gives some advices as to the manner

manner of collecting and transmitting their bounty; (chap. viii. 1—13.) Expressing his joy for the readiness of Titus to assist in finishing the collection, and making an honourable mention of the worthy character of other Christian brethren, whom he had joined with him in the same commission. (ver. 16, *to the end.*) He then with admirable address further urges their liberal contribution, and in a full assurance of its success, recommends them to the Divine blessing. (chap. ix. *throughout.*)

Having expressed in the former part of the epistle, and on occasion of this contribution, his confidence in the abundant grace which had been bestowed on the Corinthians, the *apostle* takes an opportunity of stating and obviating some reflections which some among them had thrown upon him for the mildness of his conduct, as if it proceeded from fear. He therefore asserts his apostolical power and authority; cautioning his opponents that they should not urge him to give too sensible demonstrations of it upon themselves. (chap. x. *throughout.*) And further vindicates himself from the perverse insinuations of such as opposed him at Corinth; particularly on the head of his having declined to receive a contribution from the church for his maintenance; which, though greatly to his honour, was by his opposers ungenerously turned to his disadvantage. (chap. ix. 1—15.) To magnify his *office* as an *apostle*, he commemorates his labours and sufferings in the cause of Christ; yet in such a manner, as plainly shews, it was disagreeable, however necessary it might be, to dwell on a subject that appeared like sounding his own applause, (ver. 16, *to the end.*) And with great clearness and plainness, yet at the same time with equal reluctance and modesty, he gives a detail of some extraordinary revelations which he had received from God, and of his experience of those Divine aids which taught him to glory in his own infirmities. (chap. xii. 1—10.) And upon the whole, vindicates the undisguised openness and sincerity of his conduct, and his visible superiority to secular considerations, in all his carriage towards the church at Corinth. (ver. 11, *to the end.*) Closing his epistle with the tenderest assurances, how much it would grieve him to be obliged to evince his apostolical power, by inflicting any miraculous punishment on those who continued to oppose him; and then subjoining the most respectful salutations, and his solemn benediction. (chap. xiii. *throughout.*)

It is evident from this view of the epistle, that a very large part of it is employed in reclaiming the Corinthian church from their undue attachment to Judaizing teachers, and from that party-spirit into which they had fallen; and in re-kindling proper regards to the unadulterated doctrine of the gospel, and to his own apostolical counsels, who had been their spiritual father in Christ. That this leading design of the *apostle* is occasionally interrupted by the introduction of other matters, and particularly the

the subject of the contribution for the poor saints in Judea, will be no objection, I apprehend, if narrowly examined, to the accuracy and beauty of this excellent composition; for the transitions which St. Paul makes, arise from some obvious and important sentiments, which render them natural and just. And there is an admirable wisdom in such digressions, as they relieve the minds of the Corinthians from that painful uneasiness which they must have felt from a constant attention to so disagreeable a subject; I mean their unsuitable conduct towards the apostle himself. It is with the same kind of propriety and sagacity, that the severe intimations, which the dignity of the apostolic character obliged St. Paul to drop against those who might persevere in their opposition, are reserved to the close of the epistle; as they would fall with additional weight, in all probability, after their minds had been softened with the reiterated expressions of his tender affection to the Corinthians in general, and the innocence and amiableness of his character had been represented in such a variety of views.

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

SECTION. I.

The apostle Paul, after a general salutation, expresses his grateful sense of the Divine goodness, in preserving him from the dangers to which he had been exposed in Asia; professing his unshaken confidence in God's continued guardianship, supported by the consciousness of his integrity before him. 2 Cor. I. 1—12.

2 Cor. I. 1.

PAUL an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy *our* brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia:

2 Corinthians I. 1.

SECT. i.

2 Cor. I. 1.

YOU receive this epistle from *Paul*, who hath the honour to call himself *an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the* sovereign *will of God;* who hath shewn by the victory of his grace over me, how able he is to bend the most obdurate and reluctant will to his own purposes, and triumph over the opposition of the most obstinate heart. *And Timothy, a* beloved *brother*[a] in Christ Jesus, joins with me in this second address *to the church of God, that is in Corinth;* whom he hath mercifully called out from the world,

a *Timothy, a* beloved *brother.*] This shews, that Timothy was returned to St. Paul, since he wrote the last epistle; and his joining the name of Timothy with his own, is an instance of the generous desire which St. Paul had to establish, as much as possible, the reputation and influence of this excellent young *minister*. Some have thought this is the reason why the *apostle* so often speaks in the *plural* number in this *epistle;* but it is certain, he often speaks in the *singular*, and that there are passages here, as well as in the epistle to the Thessalonians, in which he uses the *plural*, without intending to include Timothy. See chap. iii. 1—3; chap. vii. 5; chap. xii. 19; 2 Thess. ii. 1—9. He also joins the name of Sosthenes with his own, in the former *epistle*, as also the name of Timothy to the *epistle* to the Philippians, and Colossians: yet does not use the *plural* there.

b Cannot

SECT. i.

world, and united to himself. A society for which I have always the tenderest regard; the respective members of which I now most cordially salute; *with all*, who, by their Christian profession, are numbered among *the saints*, that are *in the whole region of Achaia*. I greet you, as I do all my brethren in such addresses: saying from my heart, May *grace and peace* [*be*] in rich abundance communicated *to you* all, *from God our Father*, the compassionate Source of universal goodness, *and* from *the Lord Jesus Christ*; through whom alone such invaluable blessings can be conveyed to such sinful creatures as we are. While I sit down to write to you, my dear brethren, in the midst of circumstances, which the world might think very deplorable, (compare 1 Cor. iv. 9, &c.) I cannot forbear bursting out into the language of joy and praise[b], for such a variety of Divine favours, as is conferred on myself and you. *Blessed*, for ever blessed, by the united songs of men and angels, [*be*] *the* great *God and Father of our* beloved *Lord* and gracious Saviour *Jesus Christ*, through whom we have this free access to him, this secure interest in him: so that we can now, with unutterable delight, view him as *the Father of mercies*, from whose paternal compassion all our comforts and hopes are derived; *and* as *the God of all consolation*, whose nature it is ever to have mercy, and who knows how to proportion his supports to the exigence of every trial.

2 Cor. 1. 1.

2 Grace *be* to you, and peace from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Blessed *be* God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;

For ever adored be this benevolent and compassionate Being, *who comforteth us in all our* pressing *tribulation*[c], by such seasonable appearances in our favour. And this, I know, is not merely for our own sakes, but *that we*, taught by our own experience, *may be able*, in the most tender, suitable and effectual manner, *to comfort those*

4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are

b Cannot forbear bursting out, &c.] It is very observable, that *eleven* of St. Paul's *thirteen epistles* begin with *exclamations* of joy, praise and thanksgiving. As soon as he thought of a Christian church planted in one place or another, there seems to have been a flow of most lively affection accompanying the idea, in which all sensibility of his temporal afflictions, or theirs, were all swallowed up, and the fulness of his heart must vent itself in such cheerful, exalted and devout language.

c *Comforteth us.*] It is certain, that the mention of these experiences must have a powerful tendency to conciliate the regard of the Corinthians to St. Paul; and such an introduction to his *epistle*, as the whole of this is, must naturally prejudice them strongly in his favour; yet this does not seem to have been by any means his aim, nor is there any appearance of art in it; but all is the genuine overflowing of an heart, which rejoiced in the consolations of the *gospel* felt by itself, and communicated to others. See verse 12, which is much illustrated by this connection.

d *Comforted*

are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.

6 And whether we be afflicted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation.

7 And our hope of you *is* stedfast, knowing that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so *shall ye be* also of the consolation.

those who are in any tribulation, by the communication of that *comfort whereby we ourselves are comforted of God*[d]; and methinks every support I feel, is much endeared to me, by the consideration, that the benefit of it may be reflected upon others. *Because as the sufferings* we endure in the cause *of Christ*, and in conformity to his example, *abound with respect to us, so our consolation by Christ*, the comforts which arise from God in him, *does abound* much more, and quite over-balance the distress. — SECT. i. 2 Cor. I. 4. 5

And much of this satisfaction to us arises from the hope we have with relation to you, my dear friends and Christian brethren; *for whether we be afflicted*, [*it is*,] we doubt not, *in subservience to* the views of *your* present *consolation, and* your future and eternal *salvation; which is* so much the more *effectually wrought out, by the patient enduring of the same sufferings, which we also undergo*, and which by our example you are taught the less to wonder at, and to bear with the greater fortitude: *or whether we be comforted*, [*it is*] still with the same view, *for your consolation and salvation*; that your eternal happiness may be promoted by those comforts which we are enabled to communicate to you with the greater efficacy. *And our hope concerning you*, that this will be the happy end of all, [*is*] *stedfast* and cheerful[e]: *knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings* to which we refer, *so* you *also* have already, in some degree, your share *of the consolation* which arises from principles and hopes which are not peculiar to us, who are apostles, or inferior ministers of the gospel, but common to all sincere believers; in which 6 7

d *Comforted of God.*] Some think this refers particularly to the comfort which the repentance of the incestuous person gave St. Paul, after the affliction he had endured on his account; (compare chap. vii. 7;) but it seems more natural, to understand it of the *general* consolation arising from the pardon of sin, an interest in God, an assurance that nothing should separate him from Christ, that afflictions should cooperate for his advantage, and that a crown of glory heightened by these trials should close the scene. On *these* topics he frequently insists in his *epistles*, and none can be more important and delightful.

e *Our hope concerning you is stedfast.*] These words, in several good *manuscripts*, are put in connection with the first clause of the 6th *verse*; and so the *version* will run thus, *Whether we be afflicted, it is in subservience to your consolation and salvation, which is effectually wrought out by the patient enduring of the same sufferings which we also undergo; and our hope concerning you is stedfast: or, whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation; knowing that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so also of the consolation.* And the repetition of the words *consolation* and *salvation*, shews how agreeable the thought was to him; so that he loved to speak of it again and again.

f *The*

SECT. i.

which number I persuade myself that you in the general are.

2 Cor. 1. 8. We write thus concerning the trials of the Christian life, having so lately experienced them in a large measure: *for we would not have you,* our dear *brethren, ignorant concerning our affliction, which* within these few months *befel us in Asia*[f], and particularly at Ephesus; *that we were exceedingly pressed* with it, even *beyond our power; so that we despaired of being able even to live* any longer, and were looked upon by others
9 as dead men. *And* not only did others apprehend this concerning us, but *we ourselves* did indeed think, that the appointed end of our ministry and life was come; and had, as it were, *received the sentence of death in ourselves*, the execution of which we were continually expecting; but the event shewed, that it was wisely appointed by Divine Providence to make our deliverance the more remarkable; and *that we might* learn for the future, *not* to *trust in ourselves*, nor merely to regard human probabilities, *but* in the greatest extremities to repose a cheerful confidence *in* the power and providence of that *God, who raiseth the dead*, at his holy plea-
10 sure, by his omnipotent word: *Who rescued us*, on this ever-memorable occasion, *from so great a death* as then threatened us, *and doth rescue* us from every danger which now surrounds us, and *in whom we trust that he will* make our deliverance complete, and *still rescue* us from every evil, and preserve us to his heavenly kingdom.
11 I say, that I have this confidence in God's continual care; and it is the more cheerful, as I persuade myself *you* are, and will be, *working together in prayer for us, that so the favour* [*obtained*] *for us by* the importunate prayers of *many, may be acknowledged by the thanksgiving of many*

8 For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life:

9 But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead.

10 Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver *us:*

11 You also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift *bestowed* upon us by the means of many persons, thanks may be given by many on our behalf.

f *The afflictions which befel us in Asia.*] Mr. Cradock thinks, that here he begins to apologize for not coming to Corinth, and introduces these troubles as an excuse for not seeing them. I think it is rather to be connected with the *preceding* discourse. Yet still it might incline them to drop their complaints, and judge more favourably of him, when they considered in what painful and dangerous circumstances he had, on the present openings of duty, been spending that time in which they had been expecting him at Corinth. As for the *afflictions* here spoken of, some have thought, that this may refer to the persecutions at Lystra, where St. Paul's danger had been so extreme, and he had been recovered by miracle; (Acts xiv. 19, 20;) but as that happened so long before the visit to Corinth, in which he planted the church there, (Acts xviii. 1,) it seems more probable, that he either refers to some *opposition* which he met with in his journey through Galatia and Phrygia, (Acts xviii. 23,) of which no particular account has reached us; or to what happened at Ephesus, (Acts xix. 29, 30,) which is Dr. Whitby's opinion.

g *That*

SECT. i.

12 For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity, and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-wards.

many on our account [g], as nothing can be more reasonable, than that mercies obtained by prayer, should be owned in praise. And this confidence which we have both towards God and you, is much emboldened, as we have an inward assurance of our own integrity, however men may suspect, or censure us: *for this is* still *our rejoicing*, which no external calamities can impair, or injuries destroy, even *the testimony of our conscience* in the sight of God who searcheth the secrets of all hearts, *that in simplicity* [h], *and godly sincerity*, maintaining perpetually that sense of the Divine presence and inspection, which is the surest guard upon unfeigned integrity, and *not with* that *carnal wisdom* which is so ungenerously and unrighteously imputed to us *but by the grace of God*, and such sentiments of fidelity and benevolence as that blessed principle inspires, *we have had*, and still continue to have, *our conversation in the world; and more especially towards you* [i], with respect to whom, in some circumstances of opposition that have happened among you, we have been peculiarly obliged to watch over our conduct; lest inadvertency should in any instance give an handle to the malice of our enemies, to exert itself, in strengthening prejudices against us, and destroying those fruits of our labours among you, for which we could not but be greatly concerned.

2 Cor. I. 12.

IMPROVE-

g *That so the favour obtained*, &c.] There is something very perplexed and ambiguous in the structure of this sentence. I have sometimes thought it might be rendered, *that* υπερ ημων, *on our account, thanks may be rendered by many persons, for* (το εις ημας χαρισμα,) *the gift*, or miraculous endowment, *which is in us*, or deposited with us, (δια πολλων,) *for the sake of many*; as if he had said, That many may join with us, in returning thanks for these miraculous endowments which were lodged with me, not for my own sake, but for the benefit of many. This would be a a sentiment worthy an *apostle*; but the rendering in the *paraphrase* seemed, on the whole, the most natural and simple; especially as δια, with a *genitive*, seldom, if ever, signifies *for the sake*, but rather *by the means* of any afterwards mentioned.

h *Simplicity, plain-heartedness.*] Not only meaning well on the whole, but declining an over-artful way of prosecuting a good end.

i *Especially towards you.*] His working with his own hands for his maintenance, among the Corinthians, (Acts xviii. 3. 1 Cor. ix. 15.) which he did not every where do, must be a convincing proof of this.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. I. LET the venerable title of saints, by which the apostle so often describes, and addresses Christians, be ever retained in our minds; that we may remember the obligations we are under to answer it, Ver. as we would avoid the guilt and infamy of lying to God and men, 1 by falsely and hypocritically professing the best religion, very possibly to the worst, undoubtedly to the vainest purposes. And that we may be excited to a sanctity becoming this title, let us often think of God, *as the father of mercies, and as the God of all* 3 *consolation;* and let us think of him, as assuming these titles, under the character of the *God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ:* so shall we find our hearts more powerfully engaged to love and trust in him, and enter into a more intimate acquaintance and frequent converse with him.

4 From him let us seek *consolation in every distress;* considering these supports, which we so experience, not as given for ourselves alone, but for others; that we, on the like principles, may *comfort them.* Let *ministers*, in particular, regard them in this view, and rejoice in these *tribulations* which may render them more capable of *comforting such as are in any trouble, by these consolations with which they themselves have been comforted by God;* that 11 so the church may be edified, and God glorified in all, by *the thanksgiving of many*, for mercies obtained in answer to *united prayers.*

Let us particularly remember the support which St. Paul experienced, when he was *pressed above measure*, and as it seemed, quite *beyond his strength, so as to despair of life, and received the sentence of death in himself;* as what was wisely appointed to teach him a firmer confidence *in God, who raiseth the dead.* Strong 9 as his faith was, it admitted of farther degrees; and the improvement of it was a happy equivalent for all the extremities he suffered. He therefore glories, as secure of being *rescued from future dangers.* Nor was his faith vain, though he afterwards fell by the hand of his enemies, and seemed as helpless a prey to their malice and rage, as any of the multitudes whose blood Nero, or the instruments of his cruelty, poured out like water. Death is 10 itself the grand rescue to a good man, which bears him to a state of everlasting security; and in this sense every believer may adopt the *apostle's* words, and while he acknowledges past and present, may assuredly boast of future deliverances.

Happy shall we therefore be, if by Divine grace we are enabled, at all times, to maintain the temper and conduct of Christians; and may confidently rejoice in *the testimony of our consciences*, that

our

our conversation in the world is in simplicity and godly sincerity; that our ends in religion are great and noble; that our conduct is simple and uniform; in a word, that we act as *in the sight of an heart-searching God.* Then may we look upon the applauses, or the censures of men, as comparatively a very light matter; and may rest assured, if, as with regard to the apostle in the instance before us, he suffers a malignant breath for a while, to obscure the lustre of our character, the day is near, which will reveal it in unclouded glory. SECT. i. Ver. 12

SECT. II.

The apostle goes on solemnly to declare his general integrity; and particularly applies that declaration to the views on which he had declined that visit to Corinth, which he had intimated an intention of making. 2 Cor. I. 13, *to the end.*

1 Cor. I. 13.
FOR we write none other things unto you, than what ye read, or acknowledge; and I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end;

14 As also you have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also *are* ours in the day of the Lord Jesus.

2 Corinthians I. 13.

I SPEAK of the integrity with which I have conducted myself among you, with great freedom; *for we write no other things to you* on this head, *but what ye* well *know*[a] *and* must be obliged to *acknowledge; and I hope that ye will* have equal cause to *acknowledge* [*them*] *even unto the end;* for by the Divine grace, you shall never have just cause to speak or think dishonourably of us, or to reflect upon any inconsistency in our behaviour. *As indeed ye have* already, 14 *acknowledged us in part;* you have acknowledged, that you have had no occasion of blaming us; for though some among you are not so ready to do us justice as the rest are, yet most avow it with pleasure and thankfulness, *that we are your boasting,* and that ye have cause to glory in your relation to us; *as ye also* in this respect, (with humble gratitude to the great author of all our successes, be it ever spoken,) [*are*] *ours* now, and will, I trust, be so *in the* great *day of the Lord Jesus;* when we hope to present you before Christ, as the seals of our ministry, and to lead you on to that heavenly kingdom, in the faithful pursuit of which we have already been so happy as to engage you. SECT. ii. 2 Cor. I. 13.

And

a *What ye know.*] The word αναγινωσκω is ambiguous, and may signify either to *acknowledge*, to *know*, or to *read*; but I think the sense here plainly determines it to *knowing*.

SECT. ii.

2 Cor. I. 15.

And in this confidence I was long *before desirous of coming to you,* and enjoying another interview with friends, who have long lain so near my heart: that the expected transports of that blessed day, might in some degree be anticipated both on my part, and on yours; and accordingly would have come to you much sooner, not only on my own account, but likewise *that ye might have a second benefit:* as I doubted not but it would have been much to your advantage, as well as have given you a great deal of joy, to have seen and conversed with your father in Christ, who had once been so dear and so welcome to you.

15 And in this confidence I was minded to com eunto you before, that you might have a second benefit;

16 *And* indeed my scheme was *to pass by you into Macedonia,* and make you a short visit[b] in my way thither; *and* then having dispatched my business in the churches there, *to come to you again from Macedonia, and* make a longer stay; that so I might *be brought forward by you in my journey toward Judea,* when I shall go thither to deliver the money raised by the contribution of the Gentile Christians for their Jewish brethren, when they shall meet at Jerusalem on occasion of some of their great feasts. (See Acts xx. 16.)

16 And to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia, unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judea.

17 *Now, when I intended this, did I use levity* in projecting my scheme, or throwing it aside on any trifling occasion? *Or the things which I purpose,* in general, *do I purpose according to the flesh;* according to carnal principles and views; that I should be continually changing my measures in the prospect of every little interest that may lead one way or another, and breaking my word, *so that there should be with me, yea, yea, and nay, nay;* such an uncertainty and inconsistency of counsels and actions, that none should know how to depend upon me, or what they had

17 When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea, yea, and nay nay?

b Make you a short visit.] δι υμων διελθειν εις Μακεδονιαν some have understood of going into Macedonia without calling on them in his way. But as he went from Ephesus to Macedonia, it was not his direct way to go by Corinth; especially considering the road we know he did take, by Troas; and if he were now in Macedonia, as I think there is great reason to believe he was, there would on that *interpretation* have been no such appearance of change in his purpose, as should have needed any apology. I therefore conclude, that his first *scheme* was to have made them *two* visits, the one in his way to Macedonia, (perhaps sailing from Ephesus to Corinth,) and then another and longer, in his return. This the word παλιν, *again*, seems to intimate, and if this were his purpose, it was now plain in fact, that he had changed it. The grand objection against this is 1 Cor. xvi. 7, which can only be reconciled by a supposition, that he had altered his purpose between the *date* of that *epistle* and his quitting Ephesus; and had given them, perhaps, by some verbal message, some intimation of it.

18 But *as* God *is* true our word toward you was not yea and nay.

had to expect from me? No; I solemnly protest, that [*as*] *the God*, whom I serve, [*is*] *faithful, our word to you* on other occasions, and on this, *hath not been* wavering and uncertain; sometimes *yea, and* sometimes *nay;* but that I have always maintained a consistency of behaviour, the natural attendant of sincerity and truth, which is always uniform and invariable. SECT. ii. 2 Cor. 1. 18.

19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, *even* by me, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea.

For our Lord *Jesus Christ, the Son of God*, our great Redeemer, *who was preached by us amongst you*, that is, *by me, and Silvanus, and Timothy*, who joined our labours among you, (Acts xviii. 15,) as we now join in writing to you this epistle, (according to what I observed in the inscription of it,) *was not yea and nay*: Christ and his gospel were not inconsistent and contradictory; *but in him* all *was yea;* and he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, the declarations of his word, and the engagements of his covenant are inviolably the same. 19

20 For all the promises of God in him *are* yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us.

For all the many and invaluably precious *promises of God*, which are given us by this covenant, and established in his blood, [*are*] *in him yea, and in him amen*[c]. They are now attended with stipulations and engagements, which may be sufficient to confirm the weakest faith, when we consider what an astonishing way God has been pleased to take for the communication of mercy by his Son; so that the more we attend to them, the more we shall see of their invariable truth and certainty; and all tends *to the glory of God by us*, which we constantly make the end of our administration, and so are animated to maintain one regular series of uniform truth, as in his sight and presence. 20

21 Now he which establisheth us with you

But we say not this, as arrogating any thing to ourselves; *for* we most readily acknowledge, that *he who also* by his strengthening grace, confirmeth and *establisheth us*[d], *together with you* 21

c *In him yea, and in him amen.*] Nothing can really render the promises of God more certain than they are; but God's giving them to us through Christ, assures us, that they are indeed his promises, as in Christ there is such a real evidence of his conversing with men; and as the wonders which God hath actually wrought in the incarnation, life, resurrection, and ascension of his Son, (facts in themselves much *stronger* than any of the glorious consequences to follow,) tend greatly to confirm our faith, and make it easier for us to believe such illustrious promises as those which are given us; the very *greatness* of which might otherwise have been an impediment to our faith, and have created a suspicion, not whether God would have performed what he had promised, but whether such promises were really given us.

d *Establisheth us.*] To explain this of furnishing St. Paul with such arguments as enabled him more and more to confirm the

SECT. ii.

you, in the faith and love of *Christ, and* he that *hath anointed us,* as a kind of first-fruits of his creatures, with that Spirit, which gives us a capacity for all the services to which we are called out, and furnishes us with all our credentials in it, [*is*] the blessed *God* himself:

2 Cor. I. 21.

you in Christ, and hath anointed us, *is* God.

22 *Who hath also sealed us*[e], to mark and secure[f] us for his peculiar property, *and,* in further confirmation of his regard for us, *given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts,* those sacred communications both of gifts and graces which lead us into enjoyments that we look upon as the anticipation of heaven, and not only as a pledge, but a foretaste of it. This is the happy state into which we are now brought, for which I desire ever to glorify and adore the Divine goodness, and to behave, as one that is favoured with such invaluable blessings, and with such glorious prospects as these.

22 Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

23 *But* with respect to that change in my purpose of coming to you, which some would represent as an instance of a contrary conduct, *I call God for a record on my soul,* and declare to you, even as I hope he will have mercy upon it[g], *that* it was, not because I slighted my friends, or feared mine enemies, but out of a real tenderness, and with a desire *to spare you* that uneasiness which I thought I must in that case have been obliged to give you, that *I came not as yet to Corinth;* as I had once intended, and given you some reason to expect. I mention this, *not because we* pretend to *have any* absolute *dominion over your faith,* so as of my own authority to dictate what you should believe

23 Moreover, I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth.

24 Not for that we have dominion over your

the Corinthians in the Christian faith, and himself in the character of a faithful *minister,* is, I think, giving but a small part of the genuine and sublime sense of this excellent *passage.*

e *Hath anointed us—sealed us.*] Mons. *Saurin* thinks, that the difference between the *unction,* the *seal,* and the *earnest,* of the Spirit is this: that the *unction* chiefly refers to those extraordinary *endowments* by which the *apostles* were set apart to their work, as *priests* and *kings* were consecrated to theirs, by being anointed; the *seal,* to the *sacraments,* which marked them out as the peculiar property of God; and the *earnest* he explains, of those *joys* of the Holy Ghost, which were the anticipation of celestial happiness. See *Saur. Ser.* Vol. XI. p. 83—85.

f Mark and secure us.] That *sealing* refers to both these, is well shewn by Dr. Whitby's *note* on this *text.* Some understand this *verse* as insinuating how unreasonable it would be to suspect *him* of levity, who was sealed by such extraordinary gifts of the Spirit. Compare John vi. 27. But that argument would be something precarious; and as he speaks of the *earnest of the Spirit* in the hearts of believers, I thought the interpretation here given much preferable.

g Have mercy on it.] Nothing but the great importance of St. Paul's vindicating his character to such a *church,* would have justified the solemnity of such an oath.

your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand.

lieve, or do; nor would we exert the power with which Christ has endowed us, to any tyrannical or overbearing purposes; *but we*, even I, and all the faithful ministers of our Lord Jesus Christ, *are* joint *helpers of your joy:* we labour to use all the furniture which God hath given us, to the advancement of your real comfort and happiness; which can only be secured by reducing you to your duty: but this very care will oblige us sometimes to take disagreeable steps with regard to those that act in such a manner, as might tend to subvert the faith of their brethren: *for by faith ye have stood* hitherto: I readily acknowledge you have in the general adhered to it; and it is by retaining the same principles pure and uncorrupted, with a realizing sense of them on our hearts, that we may still continue to stand in the midst of all the opposition we necessarily meet with, from men insensible of every bond of duty and gratitude.

SECT. ii.

2 Cor. I. 24.

IMPROVEMENT.

ALL the promises of God are yea and amen in Christ: let us depend upon it, that they will be performed; and make it our great care, that we may be able to say, that we are interested through him in the blessings to which they relate. Let there be a proportionable steadiness and consistence in our obedience; and let not our engagements to God *be yea and nay*, since his to us are so invariably faithful. Ver. 20

Are we *established in Christ?* Are we *sealed with the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts?* Let us acknowledge that *it is God* who hath imparted it to us; and let *Christians* of the greatest steadiness and experience be proportionably humble, rather than by any means elated on account of their superiority to others. 19 21 22

We see the light in which *ministers* should always consider themselves, and in which they are to be considered by others; *not as having dominion over the faith* of their people, having a right to dictate by their own authority, what they should believe, or, on the same principles, what they should do; but *as helpers of their joy*, in consequence of being helpers of their piety and obedience. In this view, how amiable does the *ministerial* office appear! What a friendly aspect it wears upon the happiness of mankind! And how little true benevolence do they manifest, who would expose it to ridicule and contempt! 24

Let

SECT. ii.

Let those who bear that office, be careful that they do not give it the most dangerous wound, and abet the evil works of those who despise and deride it; which they will most effectually do, if they appear *to form their purposes according to the flesh.* Let them with a single eye direct all their administrations to the glory of God and the edification of the church; that they may be able to appeal to their hearers, as those that must *acknowledge,* and bear their testimony to their uprightness. In that case, they will be able to look on them as those in whom they hope *to rejoice in the day of the Lord.* And if, while they pursue these ends, they are censured as actuated by any mean and less worthy principle, let them not be much surprised or discouraged: they share in exercises from which the blessed apostle *St. Paul* was not exempted; and indeed there is no integrity, or caution, which can guard any man from the effects of that malice against *Christ* and his *gospel,* with which some hearts overflow, when they feel themselves condemned by it.

Ver. 17

13

14

SECT. III.

The apostle expresses his great affection to the Corinthians, as manifested both in his sympathy with the offending member of their church, who, having been under censure, was now penitent; (in which view he advises his re-admission:) and also in his solicitude for tidings concerning them from Titus, whom not finding at Troas, he went to meet in Macedonia. 2 Cor. II. 1—13.

SECT. iii.

2 Cor. II. 1.

2 CORINTHIANS II. 1.

I NOW plainly and faithfully tell you the true reason of that delay of my journey, which has so much surprised most of you, and at which some appear to be scandalized. It was not that I forgot you, or failed in any friendly regards to you; *but I determined this with myself,* on hearing how things stood among you, *that I would not,* if it could by any means be prevented, *come to you again in grief*[a]; in circumstances which must have grieved both myself and you; but

2 COR. II. 1.

BUT I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you with heaviness.

a *I would not come to you in grief.*] It may be objected, why then did he speak of coming in his former *epistle,* (1 Cor. xvi. 5—7,) when the *incestuous* person being yet impenitent, and their obedience to his directions, with relation to that case, being as yet unapproved, the cause of *sorrow,* and the necessity of *grieving* them, seemed yet greater than now? But it is very likely, that after he had writ that *epistle,* and perhaps while these things were in suspense, he had received news of *other* disorders among them; and indeed it is evident, that he seems apprehensive, even on supposition that the *incestuous* person were happily restored, he might *yet* be under a necessity of exercising an unwilling severity among them. Chap. xii. 20, 21; and chap. xiii. 1—6. 10.

b *Unless*

but that I would wait for these fruits which I had reason to hope from my endeavours in my former epistle, to regulate what had been amiss. SECT. iii.

2 Cor. II. 2.

2 For if I make you sorry, who is he then that maketh me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me?

For if I should be obliged to *grieve you, who should then rejoice me, unless it be he who is* now *grieved by me*[b]? My affection to you as a church is indeed so great, that I could enjoy very little comfort myself, if you were in sorrow, especially in consequence of any act of mine, however necessary it were: *And* therefore *I have written thus to you*, in order to the farther promoting of that reformation which is necessary to my own comfort, as well as to your honour and peace; *that I may not, when I come* again, *have grief on account of those for whom I ought to rejoice, having this* confident *persuasion concerning you all* in general, *that my joy is* [*the joy*] *of you all*[c], and that you do in the main bear the same affection towards me, as I feel in my heart towards you. *For* some time ago, *with much affliction, and* over-bearing *anguish*[d] *of heart, I wrote* an epistle *to you*[e], which was attended *with many tears*, and I designed by it, *not*, as you may be sure, *that ye might be grieved, but that ye might know*, by one of the most genuine tokens which it was possible for me to give, *that overflowing love which I bear to you*, of the degree and tenderness of which I was never myself so sensible as I have been since this sad occasion of discovering it happened. *And if any one of you hath* been so unhappy, as to have *occasioned grief, he hath only grieved me in part;*

3 And I wrote this same unto you, lest when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice: having confidence in you all, that my joy is *the joy* of you all.

4 For out of much affliction and anguish of heart, I wrote unto you with many tears; not that you should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.

5 But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part:

I

b *Unless it be he who is grieved by me.*] It cannot reasonably be objected, that the *sound* part of the church would rejoice him; for even they would be grieved by the necessity of such *severities*; they would sympathize with the afflicted and corrected persons; and on the other hand, the recovery of offenders would give him more sensible joy than any thing else; which considerations taken together will abundantly justify this expression.

c *My joy is* the joy *of you all.*] Mr. Locke argues from hence, that a distinction is to be made between the Corinthians, to whom this *epistle* was written, and the false teachers who were Jews, and who crept in among them, and whom he does not comprehend in the number of those concerning whom he speaks with such tenderness and hope. And thus he would reconcile this *passage*, and chap. vii. 13—15, with chap. xi. 13—15; chap. x. 6—11. Compare chap. xi. 22, where it is intimated some of them were Hebrews. But as we are sure some of the Corinthians had been seduced and alienated from St. Paul by them, I think it most reasonable to understand this as spoken of what he might conclude to be their general character; and it was both generous and prudent in the *apostle* to set it in this point of view.

d Over-bearing *anguish.*] This seems the import of συνοχη; which nearly resembles συνεχει, (compare chap. v. 14,) which I render *bears away.*

e *Wrote* an epistle, &c.] Probably he here refers to such passages as those in the *first epistle*, which speak of scandalous persons among them, and direct to the methods to be taken to reduce them to order.

f *To*

SECT. iii.

2 Cor. II. 5.

I am but one of a much greater number, who have felt this affectionate concern. And this I say, *that I may not overburden you all,* nor fix any unjust charge upon the whole body of the Corinthian church, as if it had taken part with such an offender in afflicting me: far from that, I rather believe it has sympathized with me in my grief. And *sufficient to such an one*[f], who hath here been the aggressor, [*is*] *this rebuke* and censure, [*that he hath*] already [*suffered*] *by many,* and indeed by the whole body of your society; which has shewn so wise and pious a readiness to pursue the directions I gave, for animadverting upon him, and bringing him to repentance. *So that,* on the whole, I am well satisfied in what the church has done; and instead of urging you to pursue farther severities against him, who now, by the blessing of God on the discipline you have used, is become a penitent. *I on the contrary,* declare it to you as my judgment, that *you should rather forgive and comfort* [*him;*] *lest such a one,* if kept under continual rebuke, *should be swallowed up with an excess of sorrow,* and rendered incapable of those duties of the Christian life, to the performance of which, I would cheerfully hope that he is now inclined. *Therefore I beseech you to confirm* [*the assurances*] and demonstrations [*of your*] *love to him,* in the most tender and endearing manner that you can; which may convince him that your seeming severity proceeded from cordial affection. *For* indeed it was partly *to this purpose* that *I have written, that I might have experience of you, whether ye would be obedient in all things* to my apostolical instructions and decisions; and it gives me unspeakable pleasure to find that ye have been so. And truly I have such confidence in you as a society, that I may say, not only in this instance, but in any other that may happen, that *to whom you forgive any thing* which hath been esteemed an offence, so as to be willing to restore the offender to your communion, *I also* shall be ready to [*forgive it;*] *and if I forgive any thing, to whomsoever it may be,* [*it is*] not out of regard to

part: that I may not overcharge you all.

6 Sufficient to such a man *is* this punishment, which *was inflicted* of many.

7 So that contrariwise, *ye ought* rather to forgive *him,* and comfort *him,* lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.

8 Wherefore I beseech you, that ye would confirm *your* love towards him.

9 For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things.

10 To whom ye forgive any thing, I *forgive* also: for if I forgive any thing, to whom I forgave *it,* for your sakes *forgave I*

f *To such an one*] Mr. Locke very well observes the great tenderness which the *apostle* uses to this offender; he never once mentions his *name,* nor does he here so much as mention his *crime;* but speaks of him in the most indefinite manner that was consistent with giving such directions in his case as love required.

g *Came*

I it, in the person of Christ?

to the offender alone, but in a great measure *for your sakes*, that as *in the person of Christ*, and by the high authority with which he hath been pleased to invest me, I join in taking off the censure. For I know the prosperity of the church in general is concerned in conducting these affairs aright, and am solicitous, *lest* if they be carried to any excess of rigour, *Satan should get an advantage over us*, and turn that severity into an occasion of mischief to the offender, to his brethren, and to others. *For we are not ignorant of his devices*, and of the great variety of stratagems which he is continually making use of to injure us, and to turn even discipline itself, to the reproach of the church, and the destruction of souls. These are the sentiments which prevail in my heart towards you; and my conduct, since the date of my last epistle, hath been a genuine demonstration of this my affectionate concern. *For when I came unto Troas*[g] *in the service of the gospel of Christ, and* found things there so situated, that *there was a* large *door opened to me in the Lord*, many circumstances seeming to invite my stay, and to give a prospect of success in my ministry; Yet *I had no rest in my spirit, because I did not find my brother Titus* there; whom I had sent to inquire into your affairs, and from whom I expected tidings of you. I would not therefore make any abode at Troas, though so many considerations concurred to invite me to it; *but taking my leave of them, I went* out of Asia *into Macedonia;* where I thought he might be, and where I had the happiness quickly to meet him, and to receive that news of you which has given me so much pleasure, and in consequence of which I have found occasion to write to you in a more comfortable manner, as I here do. And I bless God, that the purposes of my Christian ministry have not upon the whole been frustrated by this journey, but that the Divine blessing hath

SECT. iii.

2 Cor. II. 11.

11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.

12 Furthermore, when I came to Troas to *preach* Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord,

13 I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia.

12

13

g *Came unto Troas.*] *Mr. Owen, (of Ordin.* Part I. p. 124,) thinks this happened in St. Paul's journey from Corinth to Macedonia; and mentions it as a fact omitted by St. Luke, to be collected from the *epistles.* Many such facts there undoubtedly are, and this seems one of them, though not just in that circumstance. It seems to have happened in that passage from Asia to Macedonia, of which so very short an account is given, Acts xx. 1, 2. He afterwards ordered some Christian friends, who were attending him to Asia after he had spent three months in Macedonia, to wait for him at Troas, (ib. verses 4, 5,) probably for this reason among others, that they might have an opportunity of preaching the *gospel* to a people who seemed so ready to receive it.

SECT. iii.

hath attended my labours here, as well as in the places which I left, that I might come hither.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET *ministers* learn from hence, after the example of this wise and benevolent *apostle*, to be very tender of the ease and com-
Ver. fort of those committed to their care; doing nothing to *grieve* or
1, 2 distress them, unless, as in the case before us, love requires it, in order to their safety and happiness. Let them learn this candid and endearing method of putting the best interpretation upon every thing, and of believing, where there is any reason to hope
3 it, that *their joy is the joy of their people also.* When professing *Christians* offend, and cannot be reclaimed by gentler methods, let them, not out of resentment, but affection, have recourse to the *discipline* which *Christ* hath instituted in his church; and when that discipline hath answered its end, and the offender is recovered to a sense of his evil, let them with the greatest pleasure concur in *re-admitting* him to the communion of the church from
6, 7 which he has been excluded; with a tender concern, *lest he should be swallowed up of over-much sorrow;* always considering, how watchful the enemy of souls is to *get an advantage over us;* and remembering, that it will be the peculiar wisdom of *ministers*, to
8 acquaint themselves with these artful and malicious *devices of Satan*, by which he is incessantly endeavouring to distress and ruin the church, and to lay snares for its members in their hopes and their fears, their joys, and their sorrows, so as to take occasion from every incident, and from every interest, to weaken and to wound them.

The great source of a right conduct on all these occasions, is
4 unfeigned *love:* that let us labour to *establish in our* hearts *towards each other:* praying that God, by his Spirit, would establish it. And though the consequence of this will be, that our spirits, like the *apostle's*, will be accessible to many sorrows which we should not otherwise feel; and though it is possible, that we, like *St. Paul* in the instance before us, may sometimes be interrupted in active
12 services of life, which we might otherwise have been more ready to pursue; yet we may hope, that while we are faithfully influenced by love, under the direction of that Christian prudence, which ought ever to attend it, views of usefulness may be *opened*, where we least expect them, may be opened one way, while they are obstructed another; yea, upon the whole, what has for a-while interrupted our success, may in its remoter consequences greatly advance it.

SECT.

SECT. IV.

The apostle expresses, in the most affectionate terms, his thankfulness to God for having intrusted him with the ministry of the gospel, for the success attending his services therein; and declares his joyful confidence in all events of the Divine acceptance; and speaks of the Corinthians, as his credentials written by the finger of God. 2 Cor. II. 14, *to the end.* Chap. III. 1—6.

2 Cor. II. 14.
NOW thanks *be* unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.

2 Corinthians II. 14.

SECT. IV. 2 Cor. II. 14.]

I HAVE informed you, that I left a fair opportunity of preaching the gospel at Troas, in consequence of that great desire I had to hear from you: for which purpose I went into Macedonia. *But* I desire thankfully to own the Divine goodness, in attending my ministry with very comfortable success there. And indeed I have great reason to break out into a transport of praise in the reflection: Yes, my brethren, thanks, everlasting *thanks* [*be rendered*] by you and me, *to* the *God* of all power and grace, *who always causeth us to triumph in Christ* [a], carrying us on from one spiritual victory to another, *and manifesteth by us in every place, the* fragrant and powerful, *odour of his* saving *knowledge.*

15 For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish.

Well may I rejoice upon this account; *for* 15 *we* the apostles, and other ministers of his gospel *are to God a sweet* and acceptable *odour of Christ,* he is as it were pleased and delighted with the incense of his name and gospel as diffused by us, both *with respect to them who* believe and *are saved, and to them who* in consequence of their unbelief, *perish* in their sins.

16 To the one *we are* the savour of death unto death; and to the other, the savour of life unto

To the latter indeed 16 [*we are*] *an odour of death;* the fragrancy, so rich in itself, instead of reviving, destroys them, and is efficacious *to* bring on *death* in its most dreadful forms. *But to the other* [*we are*]

a *Causeth us to triumph.*] Witsius would render θριαμβευοντι, who *triumphs over us,* (compare Col. ii. 15,) and supposes it expresses the joy with which St. Paul reflected on that powerful and sovereign grace which had led him in triumph, who was once so insolent an enemy to the gospel. I rather think the *apostle* represents *himself* as triumphing through the Divine power. And as in triumphal processions, especially in the *east,* fragrant odours and incense were burnt near the *conquerors;* so he seems beautifully to allude to that circumstance, in what he says of the οσμη, *the odour of the gospel,* in the *following verses.* And he seems farther to allude to the different effects of strong perfumes, to cheer some, and to throw others into violent disorders, according to the different dispositions they are in to receive them; and *Ælian* observes, that some kind of animals are killed by them, *Hist. Anim.* iii. 7.

b *Adulterate*

SECT. iv.

are] *an odour of life:* the gospel revives their souls, and is effectual *to* their eternal *life* and salvation. *And* when we consider all these awful consequences, which one way or other attend our ministry, we may truly say, *who* [*is*] *sufficient for these things?* Who is worthy to bear such an important charge? Who should undertake it without trembling? Nevertheless, though we must acknowledge ourselves unworthy of such a charge, God is pleased to succeed us in the execution of it, as he knows our sincerity in his sight and presence. *For we are not as many, who adulterate the word of God*[b] by their own base mixtures, and retail it, when formed according to the corrupt taste of their hearers; *but as of* unmingled *sincerity, but as* by the express command *of God, in the presence of God we speak in* the name of *Christ;* delivering every part of our message, as those that know how awful our account is; and how impossible it is conceal so much as a single thought from that all-penetrating Being to whom we are shortly to give it up.

2 Cor. II. 16.

unto life. And who *is* sufficient for these things?

17

17 For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.

2 Cor. III. 1.

And when I say this, *do we again*, as some presume to insinuate, *begin to recommend ourselves*, and one another, [*to you?*] *Or do we need as* I perceive *some* [*do*], *recommendatory letters to you* from other churches, *or recommendatory* [*letters*] *from you* to others? Truly I may well say, *you are* yourselves *our epistle*, the best recommendation from God himself, his testimonial, as it were, *written upon your hearts*[c] in the glorious change by our means produced there; and the effects of it are so apparent in your lives, that I may say, ye are *known and read by all men*, who know what you once were, and you now are; and they who consider these things, must acknowledge, that such success granted by the co-operation of Divine grace, is as evident a proof of God's gracious presence with us as can well be imagined. [*Ye*] whose

2

3

2 Cor. III. 1. Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some *others* epistles of commendation to you, or *letters* of commendation from you?

2 Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men:

3 *Forasmuch as ye are* manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, ministered by us,

b *Adulterate the word.*] Καπηλευοντες is a very expressive phrase, and alludes to the practice of those who deal in liquors, which they *debase* for their own greater gain; and it insinuates in strong terms the *base* temper and conduct of their false teachers. *Bos* has finely illustrated the force of this expression in his learned and elegant note on this text. *Exer.* p. 154, 155.

c *Upon your hearts.*] Some *copies* read *our hearts*, that is, *always remembered and thought of.* But I apprehend, *the apostle* means, that the change produced not only in their external conduct, but in their inward temper, was so great, that all who could judge of it by intimate knowledge, (and it is certain that some judgment may be formed,) must own it a great attestation of his *ministry.* The great enormities in which they were once plunged, (see 1 Cor. vi. 11, &c.) would much illustrate this argument.

d To

us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.

whose characters were some of them once so enormous, (1 Cor. vi. 11,) but [*are*] now so amiable and excellent, are indeed *manifest* and apparent, *as the epistle of Christ* which is *ministered by us;* and by you Christ doth, as it were, declare, that he hath been faithfully preached among you by us; an epistle *written not*, as epistles generally are, *with ink, but* by traces drawn *by the Spirit of the* one *living* and true *God*, moving on your hearts, and producing that variety of graces which render many of you so conspicuous and lovely. And the inscription is *not*, (as that boasted monument, which did so great an honour to the mission and authority of Moses,) written *in tables of stone, but in the fleshly tables of the heart;* to which no hand, but that by which the heart was made could find access, in such a manner as to inscribe these sacred characters there. *Such confidence have we towards God by* Jesus *Christ*, that our ministry shall be effectual in other places, and that the world shall by your means be persuaded of our apostleship.

SECT. iv.

2 Cor. III. 3.

4 And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward:

4

5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves: but our sufficiency *is* of God.

5

We say this, *not* as insinuating, *that we are sufficient of ourselves to reckon upon any thing as from ourselves* [d]; we would not insinuate this, or encourage any others to do it; *for* we are upon all occasions ready most thankfully to acknowledge, that all *our sufficiency* [*is*] *from God;* whatever furniture of any kind we have for our work, we humbly ascribe it to him, and from him arise all our expectations of success with this furniture, whatever it be: From that great and adorable Author of all good, *who also hath made us* his apostles, and others whom he hath sent into the work, *able ministers of the new covenant*, sufficiently qualified to discharge that important trust of proposing this gracious covenant of God, established in Christ, to our fellow-creatures. For we are indeed ministers *not of the letter, but of the Spirit* [e]; *for* we are enabled to enter into the sense and spirit of the law

6 Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the Spirit: for the letter

6

d *To reckon upon any thing as of ourselves.*] This seems the most exact rendering of λογισασθαι τι ως εξ εαυτων. Dr. Whitby renders it *to reason*, as if the *apostle* had said, We are unable by any reasoning of our own to bring men to conversion: which gives a fine and just sense, but I think only a part of what the *apostle* intended. Compare Acts xix. 27; Rom. iv. 3, 6, 11; chap. viii. 18, 36; 1 Cor. iv. 1; in all which the word λογιζομαι has the signification we here assign it, and signifies *to reckon, or account.*

e *Not of the letter, but of the Spirit.*] To understand this of an *allegorical*, rather than *literal* explication of the Old Testament, is very arbitrary and unwarrantable; and I wish no Christian commentators had given encouragement to the Deists to abuse this *text* in the manner it is well known they have done.

SECT. iv.

law, and other sacred writings; whereas that Divine volume is to the Jews, but as a heap of letters and characters, which they know not how to read and understand, and yet pride themselves so much in them, that in that sense it may be said, they receive mischief, rather than benefit, from their own oracles. Thus *the letter killeth;* the unbelieving Jews are undone by their obstinate adherence to it, and more prejudiced against the gospel, than those that never heard of any Divine revelation at all. *But* when taught by *the Spirit* of God, speaking in us, they enter into the spiritual sense and design of the law, then it *giveth life;* it establisheth our faith, quickens our obedience, and becomes a source of happiness in this world and in the next.

2 Cor. iii. 6.

ter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.

IMPROVEMENT.

Chap. ii. 15, 16

MAY the infinite importance of *the gospel message* be deeply impressed on all who preach, and all who hear it. *Life*, or *death*, is in question; eternal life, or everlasting death: and while it is from day to day reviving its thousands, is it not to be feared, that in some places it is, by the righteous judgment of God on hard and impenitent hearts, aggravating the guilt and misery of its ten thousands? How awful is the work of dispensing this *gospel!* Who can pretend to be *sufficient for such things*

16 as these: Who, that considers the nature and importance of the ministerial work, can undertake, or pursue it, but with *fear and trembling!*

Chap. iii. 5.

Yet, *insufficient* as they ought humbly to acknowledge themselves to be, *to reckon upon any thing, as from themselves*, there

Chap. ii. 14.

is a *sufficiency in God*, imparted to faithful *ministers;* in consequence of which they are *often made to triumph in Christ*, and borne on, in a holy superiority to all the difficulties of their work, and see their labour not to be in *vain in the Lord.* Well may that support them, under the discouragements, which, in other instances they feel, when the fruit of their labours does not immediately appear, yea, when the present state of many under their care is directly contrary to what they could desire; for their

15 *work is still with the Lord*, and they are *a sweet savour to God in them that perish, as well as in them that are saved.* Let them therefore gird up the loins of their mind, and exert themselves with the utmost vigour, rejoicing in this, that God will on the whole be glorified, and they shall on the whole be accepted, and through his abundant grace be amply rewarded. Yea, God will consider,

consider, in that day of final recompense, the anguish which they have felt for the souls they have seen perishing under their *ministrations*, as well as the faithful pains they have bestowed to reclaim them. SECT. IV.

But as they desire to secure this acceptance; yea, to secure their own salvation, let them never allow themselves, by any foreign mixtures, to *adulterate the word of God;* but let them *speak it* in its uncorrupted *sincerity, as in the sight and presence of God,* and 17
as those who know it is not their business to devise a message out of their own hearts, but to deliver what they have *received of the Lord.* So may they hope there shall not be wanting those, who, according to the views which the *apostle* gives us of these *Corinthians,* shall appear as *epistles written by the hand of Christ himself,* in attestation of their commission from him. Chap. iii. 2.

That *ministers* may more cheerfully hope for, and expect such an honour, let us all pray, that the Spirit of God may lead them into the true sense and meaning of *scripture:* that they may not unprofitably amuse themselves and their hearers with vain and cold criticisms *on the letter* of it, so as to neglect and forget what 6
is most *spiritual* in its design and meaning; but that they may, under Divine illumination, attain to the *mind of the Spirit,* and be enabled to make greater proficiency in unfolding and illustrating the important mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, and may be to multitudes a *savour of life unto life.* Chap. ii. 16.

SECT. V.

The Apostle, farther to recommend the ministry of which he had been speaking, falls into a very pertinent and useful digression concerning the comparative obscurity of the Mosaic law, and the superior glory and permanence of the gospel. 2 Cor. III. 7, *to the end.*

2 Cor. III. 7. BUT if the ministration of death written *and* engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses, for the glory of

2 Corinthians III. 7.

SECT. V.

I HAVE just been observing, that the letter of the law, in that sense in which it is maintained by the Jews, killeth in itself; it binds down transgressors under a sentence of death, and by the perverseness of their interpretation, is the occasion of ruin; while the Spirit quickeneth. And let me now direct your thoughts to the argument arising from hence, to prove the greatly superior excellence of the gospel: *for if* the Mosaic law, which was indeed *the ministration of death,* which was [*contained*] *in* visible *letters,* [*and*] the most excellent part of 2 Cor. III. 7.

SECT. V.

which was *engraven in* the two tables of *stone*, hewn indeed and prepared by God himself, which Moses brought down from mount Sinai in his hands, *was attended with* a signal and undeniable *glory, so that the children of Israel could not look directly upon the face of Moses, because of the glory of his countenance which was* so soon
8 *to be abolished* in death: *How much more shall* that, which may with so much propriety be called *the ministration of his Spirit, be glorious?* Since the work of the Spirit of God on the heart of a rational being, is so much more important, than any dead characters which could be engraven on insensible stones.

2 Cor. III. 7.

of his countenance, which *glory* was to be done away:

8 How shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious?

9 This may be farther apparent, when we consider what I hinted before, concerning the impossibility of obtaining life and salvation by the Mosaic law. *For if* that, which was, in its effects, only *the ministration of condemnation*, pronouncing a sentence of death, in many cases without mercy, and which at last certainly ended in leaving persons under condemnation, as it was incapable of taking away the moral guilt of any one offence; [*was attended with*] so bright *a glory*[a]; *how much more shall* the gospel, which may well be called *the ministration of righteousness, exceed in glory?* as it puts us into so certain a way to obtain justification and life everlasting.

9 For if the ministration of condemnation *be* glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.

10 *For even that which was made glorious* at its first dispensation, that is, the law of Moses, *hath no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth it* by unutterable degrees; so that as the sun swalloweth up the light of the moon and the stars, in like manner is the lustre of former dispensations swallowed up in that of
11 the gospel. *For if that which was to be* so soon *abolished, was* nevertheless *attended*, as we have seen, *with* some considerable degrees of *glory*, to illustrate its Divine original and authority, *how much more glorious* [*must*] *that*

10 For even that which was made glorious, had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth.

11 For if that which is done away *was* glorious, much more that which

[*be*]

a *Attended with glory.*] Dr. Whitby has taken a great deal of pains to prove, that there is an intended opposition between the *glory*, that is, the visible lustre on the countenance of Moses, (compare Exod. xxxiv. 29, 30, where the *Seventy* use the word δεδοξασται,) with the *glory* which descended on the *apostles*; (Acts ii. 3, 4;) and considers each as an *emblem* of the dispensation to be introduced, but with incomparable advantage on the side of the *gospel*. But laboured as this interpretation is, I cannot acquiesce in what is singular in it; and it had been obvious to have objected to *verse* 11, that the cloven tongues of fire left no such lasting lustre on the *face* of the *apostles* as on that of Moses.

b *If*

which remaineth *is* glorious.

[*be*] *which remaineth* immutable through the remotest ages [b]! SECT. V.

12 Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech.

This is the glorious ministry in which we are engaged; and it brings along with it the sublimest sentiments and the noblest views. *Having therefore this hope* and confidence, it is no wonder that *we use great liberty of address*, when we are speaking to you; *And* [*are*] *not* herein concealed, *as Moses*, [*who*] *put a vail upon his face*, (compare Exod. xxxiv. 33 [c],) wherein he was a kind of type and figure of his own dispensation; so *that* he might seem thereby to intimate, that *the children of Israel could not directly look to the end of that* law *which* he brought, and which *was*, as I observed before, *to be abolished* [d]; *But* on the contrary, *their understandings are* evidently *blinded, for until this day the same vail continues* upon the law, or rather upon their own hearts, and is still *unremoved during the reading of the Old Testament;* which contains such distinct prophecies of Christ, and such lively descriptions of him, that one would imagine it impossible that he should not be immediately acknowledged and adored by all that profess to believe its Divine authority; *which* [*vail*] *is taken away in* those that receive *Christ*, who have in him the true substance of those shadows, and the great end of its most important prophecies. *But* as to the unbelieving Jews, as I said before, *the vail* which they wear in their synagogues, too aptly represents that which *is upon their heart when Moses is read, even to this day* in their hearing; in consequence of which they can no more see the mind of Moses, than their fathers could see his face. *But* it shall not always be so; the house of Israel is intitled to a variety of most excellent promises, relating to the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom; and as when Moses went in to

2 Cor. III. 12.

13 And not as Moses, *which* put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished.

13

14 But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away, in the reading of the Old Testament; which *vail* is done away in Christ.

14

15 But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart.

15

16 Nevertheless, when it shall turn to the

16

b *If that which was to be*, &c.] Mr. Hallet would render it, "if that which was done away, was done away by glory, how much more doth that which remaineth, remain in glory." But I think this must appear harsh to every one that examines the original; διὰ δοξης, is literally *by glory*, and so may signify, *introduced* by it, or *attended* with it, or *confirmed* by it; and in either of these senses may well be applied to the *shining* of the *face* of Moses.

c *And are not*, &c.] All that follows from hence to the beginning of the 18th verse may be included in a *parenthesis*.

d *Which was to be abolished.*] Such an oblique manner of speaking on this subject, makes the argument from these words peculiarly striking. It is taken for granted, as a thing certainly known, and quite indisputable, that the *Mosaic* dispensation was to be abolished.

e *Be-*

SECT. V.

to the Lord, he laid aside his vail, so *when it*, that is, the people of Israel, *shall turn unto the Lord*, when the blessed period appointed for their general conversion shall come, *the vail shall be taken away*, and the genuine sense of the sacred oracles shall break in upon their minds with an irresistible light. *Now the Lord* Jesus Christ *is that Spirit* of the law of which I spake before; to whom the letter of it was intended to lead the Jews; and it is the office of the Spirit of God, as the great Agent in his kingdom, to direct the minds of men to it. *And* let him be universally sought in this view; for *where the Spirit of the Lord* [*is*,] *there* [*is*] *liberty*; a more liberal and filial disposition, to which under the influence and operation of the Spirit, the gospel brings those who were subject to bondage, under the imperfect dispensation of Moses. *And* in consequence of the liberty, enjoyed by virtue of the gracious œconomy, *we all*, who have been so happy as suitably to welcome it, *with unvailed face*, attentively *beholding as by a glass*[e] or mirror, *the glory of the Lord*[f] reflected from his word, *are transformed into* something of *the same* resplendent *image* of the blessed Redeemer, whose shining face we there see; and the more stedfastly we behold this illustrious and amiable form, the more we do partake of it; proceeding gradually *from glory to glory*. And all this is *as* proceeding *from the Lord the Spirit*[g]; for as the Lord Jesus Christ is the Spirit of the law, so the Divine Spirit, under his direction and influences, is the cause of this noble and Divine effect.

2 Cor. III. 16. the Lord, the vail shall be taken away.

17 Now the Lord is is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty.

18 But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed in the same image, from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord.

IMPROVE-

e *Beholding as by a glass.*] Some would render καλοπτριζομενοι *reflecting as from a glass.* But Elsner and Bos, have abundantly proved, what indeed is evident to all versed in the language, that it has the signification here assigned; and indeed the other interpretation would obscure and perplex the sense.

f *Beholding—the glory of the Lord.*] Here is one of the most beautiful *contrasts* that can be imagined. Moses saw the *Shechinah*, and it rendered his face resplendent, so that he covered it with a *vail*, the Jews not being able to bear the reflected light: we behold Christ, as in the *glass* of his *word*, and, (as the reflection of a very *luminous* object from a mirror, *gilds* the face on which the reverberated rays fall, (our *faces* shine too; and we *vail* them not, but *diffuse* the lustre, which, as we discover more and more of his glories in the *gospel*, is continually increasing.

g *By the Lord the Spirit.*] As the order of the *Greek* words is unusual, not πνευματος του κυριου, but κυριου πνευματος, Dr. Whitby would render it *by the Lord of the Spirit*, that is, by Christ, in whom the Spirit dwells, and by whom it is communicated according to his sovereign will. But the *paraphrase* unites the two senses, each I think more natural, though which of the two was chiefly intended, I cannot absolutely determine.

IMPROVEMENT.

STILL doth this glorious *glass* of the *gospel* stand full in our view, from which the lustre of the *Redeemer's* countenance is reflected. Let us daily behold his image there, and contemplate it with an attentive eye, as those who are solicitous, that we may wear some of those rays; yea, that we may wear them with still increasing lustre; that we *may be transformed from glory to glory*, and reflecting those rays, *shine as lights in the world.* SECT. V. Ver. 18

Let us endeavour to raise our minds to this laudable temper, by frequently reflecting on the excellence of the *Christian* dispensation, as a *dispensation of the Spirit and of life;* whereas the law was the *ministration of death;* and while, from the glory attending the law, we infer, with the *apostle*, the super-eminent glory of the gospel, let us learn also the superior obligation it brings us under, to regard and obey it, and the proportionably greater danger of despising it. The law of *Moses* was soon *to be abolished;* the gospel still *remains*, and shall remain to the end of time. Let us pray for its prosperity, and do our utmost to promote it. And let us earnestly plead with God, that, whereas there is now *a vail upon the face of the Jews even unto this day*, when the sacred records *are read among them*, they may *turn unto the Lord, and find the vail taken away;* that so by the conversion of *Israel* as a nation, there may be a glorious accession of evidence to *Christianity;* and that the *Jews* themselves may be happy in the blessing of him whom their fathers crucified, and whom they continue contemptuously to reject. 7,8 11 14 16

Let the *ministers* of the *gospel*, while defending so divine a cause, and enforcing so important a message, use all becoming *plainness of speech;* and may all *Christians* know more of that *liberty which the Spirit of the Lord gives*, that God may in all things be glorified, through *Jesus Christ. Amen.* 12 17

SECT. VI.

The apostle declares his courage, and disclaims all sinister views and all distrust of success, in pursuing the glorious ministry he had described: being persuaded, that such a gospel could not be rejected, but in consequence of the most fatal prejudices. 2 Cor. IV. 1—6.

2 COR. IV. 1. THEREFORE, seeing we have this ministry,

2 CORINTHIANS IV. 1.

SUCH are the distinguished glories of the gospel-dispensation, and its effects on the hearts of

SECT. VI. 2 Cor. IV. 1.

SECT. VI.

of those who sincerely embrace it. And *therefore having been entrusted with such a ministration, as we have obtained mercy* [*of God*] to be thus honoured, *we faint not* under any of those difficulties we are called out to encounter; nor in any degree desist from our glorious enterprize[a]. *But we have renounced,* and set at defiance, *the hidden things of shame*[b]; in which the priests of Paganism deal so much, in order to impose on the people over whom they preside, practising in their mysteries so many impure, and so many foolish rites. We need not any of their artifices; *not walking in craftiness,* as some would insinuate that we do, *nor deceitfully corrupting* and disguising *the word of God; but by the manifestation of the* genuine and unsophisticated *truth, recommending ourselves to every man's conscience,* we steadily and constantly act, as *in the* all penetrating *sight of God;* and therefore are willing, that all the world should know what the arts and mysteries of our ministry are.

2 Cor. IV. 1.

try, as we have received mercy, we faint not:

2 But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

3 *But if our gospel,* after such open and generous conduct on our side, *be* still *under a vail too*[c], as the law is with respect to so many; *it is vailed to those that are perishing;* they must be very bad men, and in a very dangerous state, who hearing it preached as it is by us, cannot enter into the main design and spirit of it, and are not inwardly engaged to reverence it.

3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

4 *Among whom* undoubtedly, that is, in the number of such unhappy wretches [*are*] *all* [*they*] *whose unbelieving minds* Satan, who herein acts as *the god of this world*[d], whose subjects the children

4 In whom the God of this world hath blinded

a Desist from our glorious enterprise.] Εκκακειν naturally expresses the *drawing back* from some strenuous undertaking, in what we often call a *dastardly* manner, on account of some difficulties attending it.

b *Renounced the hidden things of shame.*] Dr. Whitby understands this of *lewd practices;* but the opposition between this *clause* and the following seems much more to favour the *paraphrase;* though to be sure the *phrase* may extend to all *dishonest artifices* of false *teachers.* The word απειπαμεθα, which we render *renounce,* does not imply they ever had any thing to do with these things; but the words "set them at defiance" seem still more literally to express the *original.*

c *If our gospel be under a vail too.*] Ει δε και εστι κεκαλυμμενον το ευαγγελιον ημων, is most literally rendered thus; and it has so evident a reference to what was said above, of the *veil* on the faces of the Jews, that it seems by all means expedient to translate it thus, rather than *hid.*—— This *text* is justly urged by Dr. *Scott, (Christian Life,* Vol. V. 220,) as a proof of the *perspicuity* of the *apostle's* writings in all matters of importance to our salvation.

d *The god of this world.*] That several ancient Christian writers should interpret this of *God the Father,* is one of the most amazing things I have met with. See Dr. *Whitby in loc.* and Dr. *Edwards, Exercit.* p. 291. I doubt not but Satan is intended and

blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God should shine unto them.

children of this world are, *hath blinded* by its dazzling vanities and allurements, *lest the lustre of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of* the invisible *God* in all his perfections and glories, *should beam forth upon them*, and should pain, or rather awaken, those weak minds, darkened by so many gross and unhappy prejudices, and slumbering to their everlasting destruction. SECT. VI. 2 Cor. IV. 4.

5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

But such as I have before described, is our conduct, however perversely it may be mistaken, or misrepresented. *For we preach not ourselves*[e]; we aim not at exalting our own authority, at extending our reputation, or securing to ourselves any secular advantage; *but*, renouncing all such views, and claims, and desires, we preach *Christ Jesus*, as *the* supreme *Lord* of his church; *and*, instead of setting ourselves up for your masters, we declare *ourselves* to be *your servants for the sake of Jesus;* and are willing, out of regard to you, and above all out of duty to him, to stoop to the humblest offices of love, by which we may be serviceable to you in your most important interests. 5

6 For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.

And it is no wonder, that we are thus disposed, considering the view of things which God hath given us by his grace; *for God, who* by his powerful word, in the first creation of this world, *commanded the light* instantaneously *to shine out of* that *darkness* which covered the whole face of the deep, (Gen. i. 5,) *hath* also *shined into our* once prejudiced and benighted *hearts*, and particularly into mine, by the internal operation of his blessed spirit, [*to impart*] *the lustre of the knowledge of God's glory*[f], discovered, as we before observed, *in the face* of our Lord *Jesus Christ*[g], from thence reflected 6

and could it be proved, as has been intimated, that this malignant spirit was so early called by the Jews סמאל, *the God who blinds*, I should think it a beautiful illustration.

e *Preach not ourselves.*] Grotius explains it thus, "we do not preach that *we* are *lords*, but that Christ is so;" and this is certainly comprehended. But I think the *phrase* may well be taken in the larger extent, expressed in the *paraphrase*. To *preach themselves*, may signify their making *themselves*, in any view, *the end of their preaching;* as preaching Jesus, a *phrase* often used, may signify preaching, so as to direct men's eyes to *him*.

f *To impart the lustre of the knowledge of God's glory.*] Γνωσεως της δοξης τυ Θευ may very well signify the *glorious knowledge of God*; but the following words determined me to the more literal *translation*, as it is more proper to speak of the glory, than of the knowledge of God, as in, or upon the face of Christ. Some would render προς φωτισμον according, or in *proportion* to, that *lustre*.

g *In the face of Jesus Christ.*] Some would render προσωπω *person;* but it so evidently signifies *face* in the *context*, (chap. iii. 13, 18,) that it seemed much better to render it *face*; though the glory here said to be reflected from his *face*, is undoubtedly that which is manifested in his *person*, in the union of *Deity* with *humanity*, and all the wonderful things he has done and suffered in consequence of it.

SECT. VI.

flected upon us, and from us to you, for the important purposes of your sanctification and salvation.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver: 1 LET all who are honoured with the *ministry of the gospel*, learn from the *apostle*, courage and fidelity; remembering they are continually *in the sight* and presence *of God*. Let them therefore renounce with abhorrence, that craft which so many who have called themselves *Christian priests*, have studied; and labour to 2 govern their whole conduct by such apparent principles of integrity and honour, that they may *commend themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.*

5 This end will be much promoted, if they learn to lay aside all sinister views of interest and ambition, of human applause, or a dominion over men's consciences; and putting on that humble character so amiably illustrated in the *apostle Paul's* writings, every where, with all loyal affection *preach Christ*, as the great Lord and Head of the church; and declare, and approve themselves the willing *servants of souls for his sake.* So humbling themselves, they will be exalted in the eyes of God and man; and will reap those heart felt pleasures now, and those honours, emoluments, and delights hereafter, which will infinitely more than indemnify them for all they may resign; and exceed not only the low appre- 21 hensions of the servants of *mammon*, in *Christ's* livery, but their own most elevated conceptions.

Let every reader seriously examine himself as to the knowledge he has of this *gospel*, and the degree in which he has felt a sense of its glory and excellence upon his heart; solemnly considering, 3 that if the lustre and efficacy of the *gospel be hidden* from him, it is a sad sign, that *he is* himself a *lost* creature, and is like to be 4 lost to God and happiness for ever; he is the captive of *Satan blinded* by him *as the god of this world*, and in the probable way to be led on to unseen, but irretrievable destruction. Dreadful situation! which might indeed occasion absolute despair, were it not for the views which the *gospel* gives us, of that God, *who* 6 *in the beginning* of the creation *commanded the light to shine out of darkness:* who can yet say, *Let there be light, and there shall be light* in the most benighted soul, and the *lustre of the glorious knowledge of God in the person of Christ shall beam forth.* Let this Divine interposition be earnestly implored; and O, that it may be imparted, before the *blinded* captives be consigned to eternal ruin, *to blackness of darkness for ever!*

SECT.

SECT. VII.

The apostle freely acknowledges his own infirmities; but glories in the strength communicated to him from God, as an effectual support under the extremest trials; over which he triumphs in the language of the strongest faith. 2 Cor. IV. 7—15.

2 Cor. IV. 7. BUT we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

2 CORINTHIANS IV. 7.

I HAVE spoken to you of the excellence of the gospel, representing it as a most invaluable treasure; and indeed it is so rich a blessing, that the highest angel in heaven might think it an honour to be employed in dispensing it. *But* such is the conduct of Providence in this respect, that *we have this* invaluable *treasure in earthen vessels;* feeble creatures, who dwell in mortal bodies, and are surrounded with numberless infirmities, are employed in dispensing it to us; *that* so *the excellency of the power*, by which its great and important ends are answered, *may* appear to be *of God, and not of us:* who are so far from being able to add efficacy to our own labours, that it is wonderful how we are enabled even to sustain them. [*We*] *are* indeed *in every respect*[a] greatly *afflicted*[b]; *but* through the Divine care over us, we are *not utterly overpressed*[c] with the weight and variety of our trials: we are often *brought into dubious circumstances;* but, blessed be God, we are *not in despair;* [*We are*] continually *persecuted* by men, *but* we are *not forsaken* of God; we are *thrown down* by our enemies, *yet* we are *not* entirely *destroyed* by them; but animated from on high, we spring up again, and renew the combat with increasing vigour. We are *always bearing about* with us *in the body, the dying of the Lord*

SECT. vii. — 2 Cor. IV. 7.

8 *We are* troubled on every side, yet not distressed; *we are* perplexed, but not in despair;

9 Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

10 Always bearing about

a *In every respect we are afflicted,* &c.] This *section* may seem a digression; but nothing could be more pertinent to the *apostle's* grand purpose. He aimed at recovering the affections of these Corinthians which were much alienated from him; for this purpose he freely opens his heart towards them, and tenderly represents the many and grievous pressures and hardships to which love to souls, and to *theirs*, among the rest exposed him. This I take to be the *true* key to this beautiful and pathetic passage.

b *We are afflicted.*] I apprehend the *apostle* hear to speak with some peculiar regard to his own case; yet not so as to exclude that of *his* brethren, which undoubtedly did very much resemble it. Compare 1 Cor. iv. 9.

c *Not utterly over-pressed.*] The word στενοχωρεμενοι properly signifies, *crushed in a strait passage.*

d *I have*

SECT. VII.

Lord Jesus Christ; so that the cruelties which were exercised in putting him to death, seem to be acted over again upon us, by the rage of the enemy; yet all this is in effect, not that an immediate period should be put to our life and ministry, as they desire, but *that the life also of Jesus*, now triumphant above all hostile power, *may be* more evidently *manifested* in the preservation of this *our* feeble *body*, which enemies, so many and mighty, are continually endeavouring to destroy.

2 Cor. IV. 10. about in the body, the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

11 *For we who live*, those of us, the apostles and ministers of Christ, who still survive, *are continually delivered over to death for the sake of* the Lord *Jesus*, and as it were, every day led out to a new martyrdom in his cause; but so many new and unexpected deliverances arise, that it seems as if these dangers were permitted on purpose, *that*, as I said before, *the life also* and power *of* the blessed *Jesus*, our Divine Saviour, *may be manifested* and demonstrated, *in* supporting *our mortal* and feeble *flesh* in the midst of all these assaults, and perpetuating our lives from year to year through so many successive dangers, which await us

11 For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

12 wherever we come. *So* that on the whole I may say, that *death worketh* continually to glorify his name *in us, but life in you:* while you are called to live for his honour, we may be said to serve our Redeemer by bearing for his sake repeated deaths.

12 So then death worketh in us, but life in you.

13 But *we* endure it all with resolution and cheerfulness, *having the same spirit of faith*, by which good men of old were animated, in their most active labours, and most painful sufferings; *according to what is written*, (Psal. cxvi. 10) *I have believed, and therefore have I spoken*[d]; *we also* cordially *believe* the certain truth of what we teach, *and therefore* go on *to speak* our important

13 We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken: we also believe, and therefore speak;

[d] *I have believed, and therefore have I spoken.*] As for the *quotation* here, some think there is an allusion to the confidence which David expresses in the preceding words, of *walking before the Lord in the land of the living*; as if the *apostle* had intended to say, we also shall in a nobler sense do it. Mr. Pierce supposes the *Spirit of faith*, here spoken of, is the Spirit of Jesus, which enabled him through faith in God to preach that doctrine which he knew would provoke the rage of a wicked world, so as to end in his death; and he undertakes to prove in his third *Dissertation*, that the cxvith Psalm, in its original sense, is to be understood as spoken by the Psalmist in the person of the Messiah. But I see no necessity for urging this. The simpler sense of the passage, as it stands in the psalm, is, "Though I have been in very great affliction, and sometimes almost depressed, yet *faith* in God hath supported me, and put this song of praise into my mouth." In this sense of the words nothing could be more natural, than for St. Paul to adopt them.

portant message, whatever may be the consequence, supported by this inward consciousness of our integrity, and animated by a powerful sense of duty towards God, and the hope of the most glorious reward from his bountiful grace. Those hopes rise to complete and everlasting happiness; which we continually pursue, as *knowing, that* if we persevere in that service with which he hath honoured us, *he who raised up the Lord Jesus* Christ from the dead by his almighty power, *will also raise us up by Jesus*, whom he will send at the last day, commissioned to accomplish this great work; *and* that then he *will present* [*us*] *with you*, before the presence of his glory with exceeding great joy, in each other, and in him; and will introduce us to that heavenly kingdom, to the prospects of which he hath called us by that gospel which we have preached, and which you have believed. *For all* these great *things* [*are*] prepared, not merely on our account, but *for your sakes, that the overflowing grace* being complete in all its diffusive extent, and exalted degrees, *might abound by the thanksgiving of many*, even of countless multitudes, who shall share for ever in it, *to the glory of God*, the great original and end of all.

SECT. VII.

2 Cor. IV. 13.

14 Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise us up also by Jesus, and shall present *us* with you, 14

15 For all things *are* for your sakes, that the abundant grace might, through the thanksgiving of many, redound to the glory of God. 15

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us adore the wisdom and goodness of God, in sending us the *gospel treasure in earthen vessels*, in employing our fellow-mortals, rather than angels, under the character of his messengers to us; by which means we are taught more to depend on God for that efficacy of power that renders them successful; to acknowledge his hand in animating and preserving them, and are kept in such an exercise of faith, as is in this present world most honourable to God, and most profitable to us. Let the *mortality* of *ministers* be suitably remembered, by themselves and others, and improved to the best purposes; and let us take care that we do not think the less honourably of the treasure on account of the weakness of *these vessels* in which its great Proprietor has thought fit to *lodge* it. Ver. 7

Let it encourage them, who are struggling with the difficulties of that arduous and important work, to think on those refreshments which the apostles experienced; in consequence of which, though *afflicted*, they were *not depressed*, and though persecuted, 8, 9

SECT. VII.

appeared not to be forsaken; but could boast, that the *support of their lives*, amidst so many pressing dangers, was a *demonstration of the life of Christ*. We may indeed all say this, with respect to
Ver. 11 the support of the spiritual life, in the midst of so many difficulties. *Having obtained help from him, we continue until this day;* and it is because *he lives, that we live also.* Confiding therefore in him, let us exert ourselves vigorously in this holy warfare to which we are called; and strenuously endeavour to maintain our ground against all the enemies who press hard to overbear and destroy us.

And that we may be thus animated, let us labour to engrave on our hearts a more lively and assured *belief* of the great and important things of which we speak, and hear; and that not only in the general, but in particular instances. Let us labour to
13 feel at once their evidence, and their energy; having the *same spirit of faith* which wrought in the apostles and prophets, and engaged them to discharge their office with such distinguished fidelity, fervor and zeal. Especially let us maintain such believing appreshensions of this great and comprehensive truth, *that God hath raised up Christ Jesus from the dead*, and that he will by *the same power also raise up his faithful ministers and servants*, who firmly retain that glorious gospel: and, as those discoveries are made for their sakes, that they may obtain salvation by him,
15 and that *God may be glorified* in their united and everlasting *praises* let us daily set before our eyes this risen and triumphant Redeemer, and look forward to that glorious appearance of his, when he shall come to be *admired in his saints*, and to be farther extolled and *glorified, in all them who believe. Amen.*

SECT. VIII.

The apostle describes the glorious hopes, which he had beyond the grave, as his great support and ground of triumph, under all those trials which he had been mentioning before; and endeavours to animate others to fidelity and zeal by that description. 2 Cor. IV. 16. *to the end.* Chap. V. 1—10.

2 CORINTHIANS IV. 16.

SECT. VIII.

WE have been speaking of the great design of God, in causing his gospel to be revealed to the children of men, that the thanksgivings of many may redound to his own glory; and *on this account we faint not* under any of the present pressures, nor suffer ourselves to be borne down by the assaults of our enemies; *but* on the contrary, *if our outer man perishes, yet the inner* man

2 Cor. IV. 16.

2 Cor. IV. 16.

FOR which cause we faint not, but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

SECT. VIII.

man *is daily renewed:* the soul gathers new strength, as the body grows weaker and weaker, and we feel our dissolution approaching: which may well be the case. *For* we have the firmest assurance, that *this momentary lightness of our affliction*, which passes off so fast, and leaves so little impression, that it may justly be spoken of as levity itself, *is working out for us a far more exceeding* [*and*] *eternal weight of glory*[a], the most solid, substantial, and lasting felicity, the exalted degrees of which, none of the boldest figures of speech can paint, nor any stretch of human thought distinctly conceive. And we may assuredly promise ourselves, that this shall be the blessed end of all, *while we are* conscious that we are *not aiming*[b] *at the things which are visible;* are not endeavouring to secure to ourselves any secular advantages of one kind or another; *but at those which are invisible.* And however vain and visionary such views may seem to the world about us, and we may be despised for attending to them, we have full satisfaction in our own minds, that we are acting the wisest part, in such a choice and preference; *for the things which are visible*, and in that respect may seem to have the advantage of others, [*are*] *temporary* and transient; *but those which are invisible*, [*are*] *eternal*, and therefore suitable to the duration of that immortal soul which God has given us, and in the felicity of which our true happiness must consist. Nor is this an uncertain, or very distant hope; *for we know* assuredly, that *if our earthly house of* [*this*] *tabernacle were dissolved*, if this mortal body, constituted of dust, were mouldered back to dust again; or if our zeal for the service of the gospel should bring on martyrdom, which should destroy it before its time; *we have*, and should immediately enter on, *a building of* which God

2 Cor. IV. 17.

17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory;

18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen, *are* eternal.

18

2 Cor. V. 1.

2 Cor. V. 1. For we know, that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house

a *A far more exceeding*, &c.] This sentence is one of the most emphatical in all St. Paul's writings; in which (as Dr. Grosvenor well expresses it) he speaks as much like an *orator* as an *apostle*. The lightness of the trial is expressed by το ελαφρον της θλιψεως, the *lightness of our affliction*; as if he had said, it is even *levity itself* in such a comparison. On the other hand, the καθ' υπερβολην εις υπερβολην, is (says Mr. Blackwall) infinitely emphatical, and cannot be expressed by any translation. It signifies, that all *hyperboles* fall short of describing that weighty eternal glory, so solid and lasting, that you may pass from one *hyperbole* to another, and yet when you have gained the last, are infinitely below it. *Blackw. Sacr. Clas.* Vol. I. p. 332.

b *Are not aiming*, &c.] This σκοπουντων exactly signifies; and our *English* word *scope*, or mark aimed at, is derived from the same *Greek* theme.

c *Not-*

SECT. VIII.

God is the great Architect and Donor; *an house not made with* mortal *hands*[c], nor to be compared with the most magnificent structure they ever raised; exceeding them all in its lustre, as much as its duration; though that duration be *eternal in the* regions of the *heavens*, far above either violence or decay. *And in this* view, *we groan* through that intenseness of soul with which we are *earnestly* and perpetually *desiring to be cloathed upon with our house, which is from heaven; Since being so cloathed upon, we shall not be found naked* and exposed to any evil and inconvenience, how entirely soever we may be stripped of every thing we can call our own, here below. And *moreover, we who are* yet *in* [*this*] *tabernacle do groan*, not only with those longings after a blessed immortality, but also *being burdened* with the present weight of many infirmities, and many calamities: for which cause *nevertheless we would not be uncloathed*, or stripped of the body; for that is what we cannot consider, as in itself desirable; *but* rather, if it might be referred to our own choice, *cloathed upon* immediately, with a glory like that which shall invest the saints after the resurrection; *that* so *what is mortal*, corruptible, and obnoxious to these disorders, burthens, and sorrows, *may* all *be* so absorbed and *swallowed up by life*, as if it were annihilated by that Divine vigour and energy which shall then exert itself in and upon us[d].

2 Cor. V. 1.

house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,

2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be cloathed upon with our house which is from heaven:

3 If so be that being clothed, we shall not be found naked.

4 For we that are in *this* tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

Now he who has wrought us to this very thing, to these noble views and sublime desires, [*is*] *God*[e]; *who hath also given us the earnest of his Spirit*

5 Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing, *is* God, who also hath given unto

c *Not made with hands*, &c.] Whether we consider this Divine building, as particularly signifying *the body after the resurrection*, in which sense Dr. Whitby takes it; or any *vehicle* in which the soul may be cloathed during the intermediate state, considerable difficulties will arise. I am therefore inclinable, rather to take it in a more general view, as referring to the *whole* provision God has made for the future happiness of his people, and which Christ represents as *his Father's house, in which there are many mansions. To be cloathed upon with an house*, is a very strong *figure*; which yet it is evident the *apostle* uses in the next *verse*; having in his thoughts the glory which each should wear, instead of being cloathed, as now, with that mortal flesh which he calls a *tabernacle*, as it is so mean, inconvenient, and precarious an abode.

d *That mortality may be*, &c.] The expression in these and the following *verses*, is not perfectly distinct; but the meaning seems to be this: "that though it appeared most desirable of all to pass to glory without dying, yet a state in which mortality should be swallowed up by life, was at all events *desirable*; and an *absence from the body* to be, not only submitted to, but *wished*, in a view of being so *present with the Lord*, as even in the intermediate state they expected to be."

e *He who hath wrought to us this very thing, is God.*] Mr. *Howe* observes, that this is a most *emphatical* manner of speaking; not only asserting that God is the author of it, but ascribing *Deity* to the author;

unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

6 Therefore, *we are* always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord;

7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

8 We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

9 Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent we may be accepted of him.

10 For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things *done* in his body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad.

Spirit, as the pledge of better, even of eternal blessings. *Therefore*, under the influences of this Divine Spirit, [*we are*] *always courageous* in the midst of surrounding danger; and whatever natural aversion we have to death, are ready to brave its terrors, in the views of that immediate happiness which lieth before us: *knowing, that while we are sojourning in the body*[f], *we are*, as it were, *in a state of exile from the Lord* Jesus Christ, in the enjoyment of whom our chief happiness consists: *For we* now *walk* and conduct ourselves in the whole course of life, *by* the *faith* of objects, as yet unseen; and *not by* the *sight* of those glories, or by a regard to those things which we can see. *We are courageous* therefore [*I say*] in these delightful views, *and think with complacency, of being rather absent from the body, and* banished from all its pleasures and enjoyments, on condition of being, as we know we shall be *present with the Lord*[g], and dwelling as those who are at home with him. *Therefore we make it the height of our ambition*[h], *that whether present* in the body, *or absent* from it, *we may be well-pleasing to him*, and receive the tokens of his acceptance and favour.

SECT. viii.

2 Cor. V. 6.

This is our concern, and it ought to be the concern of all; *for we must all*, without any exception, whatever our station in life may have been, *be manifest before the tribunal of Christ;* our inmost soul must there be displayed, and all the most secret springs of our actions laid open, *that every one may* then *receive*, in that final distribution of happiness and misery, *according to what he hath done in the body, whether good or evil;* in full proportion to his actions, and the principles from which the Searcher of hearts knows them to have arisen.

IMPROVE-

thor; as if he had said, "none but God could have raised us to such a temper." *Howe's Works*, Vol. I. p. 680.

f *Are sojourning in the body.*] So ἐνδημοῦντες here properly signifies; and it is, as Dr. Clark observes, wrong to render it, *while at home in the body;* since it is the *apostle's* design to intimate, that this is not our home.

g *Present with the Lord.*] From this *text* Mr. *Boyse* argues, not only against the *sleep* of the soul during the intermediate state; but that saints, when departed from our world, go into the highest heaven; where they *dwell* with Christ, and are not as some have supposed, in a place where they have only a *transient* sight of him on some extraordinary occasions. *Boyse's four last Things*, p. 592.

h *We make it the height of our ambition.*] This φιλοτιμούμεθα plainly imports; and it is flat to translate it, *we labour.*

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. VIII.

BEHOLD the great lesson which as *Christians* we have to learn, and which is of such efficacy, that if we thoroughly master it, all the other parts of our duty will become easy and delightful—

Ver. 18 to *look at the things which are unseen*, rather than at those *which are seen!* And what can be so reasonable, as that eternal objects should employ the thoughts of immortal beings, rather than those which they must soon survive? Let all our souls be directed to them. Let us contemplate the feeble structure of this *earthly tabernacle*, which gives us so many tokens of its nearly approaching dissolution: this tabernacle, in which we *groan* under such a variety of *burthens*; and let us comfort ourselves with the prospect of speedy deliverance; that so while the *outer man perisheth, the inner may be renewed day by day.* What though we have death before us in a certain prospect, and know we must soon be *absent from the body?* If we are true *Christians*, we have the most express assurance, not only that the time will come, when we shall inhabit a *building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;* but that we shall immediately be *present with the Lord*, with that blessed Redeemer, *whom having not seen we love.* How much more shall we love him, how much more shall we rejoice in him, when we are blessed with his presence, and behold his glory!

Chap. V. 1. 4. Chap. IV. 16. Chap. v. 8. 1. 6.

While we have this consciousness, let us be always confident and *courageous*, and rejoice in afflictions and mortality; since this *light and momentary affliction* hath so happy an influence upon a *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;* and death will be the consummation of our wishes. Let this then be our constant care, to *walk by faith and not by sight;* having this ever for the glorious object of our *ambition*, that *whether present or absent, we may be accepted of the Lord.* May God *work us up to this self same thing;* and may the operation of his grace upon our souls for that purpose, be always acknowledged with the humblest gratitude, and its farther communications sought with the most earnest importunity. Then shall we not dread *the tribunal of Christ*, before which we are so certainly to appear, and *be made manifest;* knowing, that our integrity will be approved, and that those works of faith and labours of love, which shall then be commemorated, will meet with gracious acceptance, and most munificent rewards.

Chap. iv. 17. Chap. v. 7. 9. 5. 10.

SECT.

SECT. IX.

Touching again upon the zeal with which he prosecuted the gospel-ministry, the Apostle makes a kind of apology for it, by pleading the irresistible engagements of a Redeemer's love, and the infinite importance of that message of reconciliation, with which he was charged; and which, while he recounts, he prosecutes in a pathetic address to the Corinthians. 2 Cor. V. 11. *to the end.* Chap. VI. 1, 2.

2 Cor. V. 11. KNOWING therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men: but we are made manifest unto God, and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

2 Corinthians V. 11.

sect. ix. 2 Cor. V. 11.

I HAVE now touched upon a consideration, which animates us to that zeal in our ministrations, with which many are so much surprised, and some not a little displeased. We often reflect how near the solemn time is advancing, when we, and our hearers, shall appear before the tribunal of Christ; and *knowing therefore the terror of the Lord*, the strict judgment which must then pass on all impenitent sinners, *we*, for their sakes, and for our own, labour to our utmost, to *persuade men* to take all necessary methods for escaping it. *But* as *we are made manifest to God, and* think of it with unutterable pleasure that he knows the integrity of our hearts, in prosecuting the work he hath assigned us, *I hope also we are manifest to your consciences*, and that I have already given, and shall continue to give, such proofs of the simplicity of my views, and uprightness of my conduct, that you will not be able to harbour any suspicion concerning it.

12 For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf,

I say these things freely; *for we do not*, after 12 the modesty and humility with which we have behaved hitherto, now begin to applaud ourselves, or *recommend ourselves again unto you*[a]; as some have very unjustly charged us with doing in some former instances; *but we are giving you occasion of* rejoicing, and *boasting on our account*, as you have indeed cause to do; and are suggesting

[a] *We do not recommend ourselves again unto you.*] It appears from hence, and from the beginning of the *third chapter*, that the Corinthians were ready to misrepresent the care St. Paul took to vindicate himself, as *pride* and *vain-glory*. On the other hand, they would have interpreted his *silence* as the effect of *guilt and confusion*. He therefore plainly, and very properly tells them, that he said this *only* in his own necessary defence, and to furnish his friends with an *answer* to those whose consciences condemned them, while they endeavoured to asperse him.

SECT. IX.

suggesting what may be sufficient, *that ye may have something to* [*answer*] *those who glory in appearance, and not in heart;* for that, I am
2 Cor. V. 12. persuaded, is the case with some of your opposing teachers, whose consciences must surely recoil upon them, and condemn them, while they pretend to vie with us in the discharge of the Christian ministry, and would challenge your regards in preference to us.

behalf, that you may have somewhat to *answer* them which glory in appearance, and not in heart.

13 *For if,* as some injuriously insinuate, *we be transported beyond ourselves*[b], and the due exercise of sober reason, [*it is*] *to God;* a zeal for his glory that animates us; *or if we be sober,* as we hope you cannot but acknowledge us to be, [*it is*] *for your sakes,* that we take so much serious pains in the prosecution of a work in which your highest interest is concerned. On the whole, love to God, and benevolence to man, are the grand principles by which we are actuated; and we cannot be cold and unaffected, while we have such grand and noble subjects before us as those which we handle among you,
14 to awaken our piety and our charity. *For the love of Christ,* so illustriously displayed in that redemption he hath wrought, constraineth us; it *bears us away*[c] like a strong and resistless torrent; *while we thus judge,* and in our calmest and most rational moments, draw it as a certain consequence, from the important principles, which we assuredly know to be true, *that if one,* even Christ, *died for* the redemption and salvation of *all* who should sincerely believe in him, and obey him, *then were all dead;* for had not all, even the very best of men, been in a state of condemnation and death, there would have been no
15 need of his dying for them. *And* now we know, that *he died for all, that they who live* only in consequence of his dying love, *should not henceforth,* from this remarkable period and æra

13 For whether we be besides ourselves *it is* to God: or whether we be sober, *it is* for your cause.

14 For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead;

15 And *that* he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves,

b *Transported beyond ourselves.*] Mr. Locke thinks, from comparing chap. xi. 1, 16, 21; chap. xii. 6, 11; that the Corinthians censured St. Paul as a fool or a madman, for what he said in commendation of himself; and then the meaning is, "you say, I am distracted for my present conduct; but this is between God and myself. I am sure you Corinthians ought not to say it; for all my soberer thoughts and most painful labours are for you." But I apprehend on the whole, that the divided clauses are to be taken in such a united view, as to give the sense with which the *paraphrase* concludes; that it was *piety* to God, and *charity* to them, which wrought up the *apostle's* mind to that transport which some were so ready to censure; and that a lively view of the *love of Christ* produced such warm impressions of both.

c *Bears us away.*] This is the beautiful import of συνεχει, which suggests a noble *simile,* which few translations observe. See the *note* on Phil. i. 23.

selves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

æra of their lives (whatever they have formerly done) *live to themselves*, so as to make their own will their rule, or to seek any interest of their own, distinct from his; *but* that they should all agree, that they will live *to* the honour, glory, and interest, of *him who died for them; and* when he *rose again* from the dead, retained the same affection for them, and is continually improving his recovered life for their security and happiness. *So that* on the whole, *we from this time* forward *know not any man after the flesh;* we have no longer any partial regard for any, on account of their being Jews by birth, or religion, or as to the aspect which their friendship for us may have on our secular interest; *and if we have known Christ after the flesh*, and governed ourselves by any carnal expectations from the Messiah, as a temporal Prince, who should render our nation the terror of the whole world, and raise us to universal monarchy, *henceforth we know* [*him*] in these views *no more*, but entertain quite different sentiments concerning him. And thus it will be with others, who enter truly into the genius of the gospel; *so that if any man* [*be*] really *in Christ* Jesus, if he have a vital and prevailing faith in him, [*there is*] *a new creation* in the heart of that man; so entirely are his principles, apprehensions, and pursuits changed; *old things are passed away*, and with respect to him, *behold, all things are become new;* he is brought as it were into another world, and is himself quite a different creature from what he before was. *And* as it is the work of God to create, so here it may properly be said, that *all things* [*are*] *of God, who hath* in his infinite condescension conquered our prejudices, and *reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ;* having by his grace in him, laid a proper and honourable foundation for the exercise of his mercy towards us, and for the subduing of our hearts to love and obedience. *And* in pursuance of this great and condescending design, he *hath committed to us* his ministers, and especially to his apostles, *the ministry of reconciliation;* entrusting us with this important message, to proclaim it to the world, and so far as in us lies, to transmit it to the remotest ages. And this is an abstract and epitome of it all; *namely, that God was in Christ* united to him, and manifesting himself by him,

SECT. ix.

2 Cor. V. 15.

16 Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we *him* no more.

16

17 Therefore, if any man *be* in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are past away; behold, all things are become new.

17

18 And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.

18

19 To wit, that God was

19

SECT. IX.

thereby *reconciling the world* both of Jews and Gentiles *unto himself;* and in consequence of
2 Cor. V. 19. that, *not imputing to them*, and charging to their account, with righteous inexorable severity, *their* various and aggravated *offences:* but setting forth an act of grace, and unlimited pardon, to all those who should believe in him. This is that great Divine truth on which our salvation depends; *and* God *hath committed unto us*, as a trust of the highest importance, *the* gracious
20 *word*, or message *of reconciliation. Therefore we are* to be considered by you, as sustaining the office and dignity of *ambassadors for Christ*[d], on his account, and in his stead; *so that God is*, as it were, *intreating* [*you*] *by us*, and *we beseech* [*you*] *in Christ's stead*[e], with the greatest importunity and tenderness of address, *that*, when so much is done on God's part to make up the breach, which must otherwise have been fatal to his offending creatures, *ye* would not, by your own obstinacy, reject the benefit of all these condescending overtures; but would *be* cordially and truly *reconciled to God*, and thankfully accept of that friendship and protec-
21 tion which he vouchsafes to offer you. And that your hearts may, if possible, be melted, we urge you by the most affecting of all arguments, even the blood and death of his incarnate Son: *for* we tell you, that *he*, that is, God, *hath made him who knew no sin*, but was perfectly innocent and perfectly holy, [*a*] *sin* [*offering*] *for us;* that by the sacrifice of himself, he might expiate the guilt of our transgressions, and *that so we might be made* accepted *in him*, and furnished with a plea, as prevalent for our justification and admission into the Divine favour, as if we had retained our innocence untainted, and in every respect conformed ourselves to *the righteousness* which the law *of God*[f] required and demanded.

was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

20 Now then we are Ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

21 For he hath made him to *be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

d *Ambassadors for Christ.*] The *apostles* were so in a peculiar sense; but if it be the will of Christ, that *ministers* in all ages should press men to accept the treaty of reconciliation established in him, then it is evident, they may be called *his ambassadors*, even though such a *phrase* had never been used in *scripture*.

e *In Christ's stead.*] So υπερ Χριστου plainly signifies here. When Christ was in the world, *he* pressed this treaty of reconciliation; and *we* rise up in his stead to urge it still farther.

f *Made the righteousness of God.*] That is, *divinely righteous*. It is a very strong *phrase* to signify our being accepted of God, as perfectly righteous, when considered as by faith united to him who was perfectly so. There is an evident and beautiful contrast, between *Christ being made sin*, and *our being made righteousness*, that is, treated as perfectly righteous.

g Addressing.

SECT. ix.

2 Cor. VI. 1. We then *as* workers together *with him*, beseech *you* also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain:

demanded. *We then* [*as*] *the joint labourers,* [*of God*] in this important work, compare 1 Cor. iii. 9. note [f], *beseech* [*you*] with the most earnest importunity, *that you receive not the* surprising *grace of God in vain;* that you do not so slight this merciful proclamation of pardon, righteousness, and life, through the blood of his son, as to lose the benefit of it. Again, let me urge immediate compliance with it on all who have not as yet secured its invaluable blessings; *for he says,* when represented as addressing himself to the Messiah [g], in one of Isaiah's prophecies, (Isa. xlix. 8.) *I have heard thee in an acceptable time, and in a day of salvation have I helped* and sustained *thee.* God there, as you see, speaks of a limited time, in which the Messiah's petition in favour of his people was welcome to him, and in which he was ready to grant salvation; and *behold now* [*is*] *the accepted time; behold now* [*is*] *the day of salvation:* this is the precious season, when, by the wonderful favour and goodness of God, complete forgiveness, and eternal felicity is freely offered. O, that you may all be so wise as to accept it!

2 Cor. VI. 1.

2 (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now *is* the accepted time: behold, now *is* the day of salvation.)

2

IMPROVEMENT.

How adorable is the Divine condescension, that such an embassy of peace should ever be sent to any of the children of the fallen Adam! How wonderful the Divine patience, that *the acceepted time, and the day of salvation,* should, after so many slights, be so long protracted! O, let us not *receive such grace in vain,* lest affronted mercy should forsake its seat, and give way to inexorable justice!

Chap. vi. 2.

Surely if there be a sentiment, that may justly excite the heart to the greatest fervour of affection, and that will vindicate the most ardent transports of zeal to spread it in the world, it must be that of the *love of Christ;* which may well *bear us away,* while we seriously consider, in how miserable a state he found us, *dead in sin,* and under a sentence of death by the Divine law; especially, when

Chap. v. 14.

g Addressing himself to the Messiah.] I think it evident, that as these words stand in Isaiah, they are a promise made to Christ; in which God engages to give him the Gentiles as an accession to his church, and reward of his mediatorial undertaking. And in this connection, it is as if the *apostle* had said, 'since such a promise is made, see to it that you seek it, and you will find it an acceptable time.' You will come as it were in a good hour, as Christ is represented to have done.

SECT. IX.

when we farther reflect, at how expensive a rate he redeemed us, even with the price of his own life. Who then, that has any remains of judgment at all, must not *judge* and determine in his own mind, that it is most fit, that our ransomed lives should be sacred to him that redeemed them; that our breasts should be on fire, with the most earnest desires to promote his cause and kingdom; that *henceforth*, from the time we come to the knowledge of this important truth, we should not *live to ourselves, but to him who died for us, and rose again*, resuming, with his renewed life, the same tender concern for our happiness, which engaged him continually to exert it in the most generous efforts for our recovery and salvation.

Ver. 14, 15

Let all secular views, therefore, be given up; and let us labour to improve in that *renovation* of soul which is the essential character of the true *Christian*; and as ever we desire to have any satifactory evidence, that we *are in Christ*, let us see to it that we are *new creatures*; and if we are indeed so, let us daily acknowledge our obligations to his transforming grace. From him are the first proposals of peace and *reconciliation* to offending creatures; from him, the disposition of soul, humbly to submit ourselves to the terms so kindly proposed, and to sue out our pardon agreeably to the purposes of this grand act of indemnity. How amazing the condescension that grants it; and appoints *ambassadors* to urge us, to have compassion on our own souls, and not reject this counsel of God against ourselves! May the *ministers* of the *gospel* often consider themselves in this view, as *ambassadors* and agents *for Christ*, by whom *God beseecheth sinners to be reconciled*; and let them prosecute this embassy, with all holy importunity and earnest address. O, that the success of it might be more apparent; that so that friendship might be established between earth and heaven, which may bring down daily anticipations of heaven to earth! Amen.

17

18

19, 20

SECT. X.

The apostle enlarges, with great freedom, on the temper with which, in the midst of all their afflictions and persecutions, he and his brethren prosecuted that important embassy of which he had been speaking in the former section. 2 Cor. VI. 3—10.

2 CORINTHIANS VI. 3.

2 Cor. VI. 3. GIVING no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed:

SECT. X.

THIS is the affair we negociate, this is the message we deliver; and while we are thus employed, it is our constant care, that *we* may behave in such a manner as may add the greatest efficacy

2 Cor. VI. 3.

SECT. X.

efficacy to our address, *and give no offence* [a] to any, *by any* part of our [*conduct*;] *that the ministry* of reconciliation *be not blamed*, and the success of the gospel thereby obstructed. *But* on the contrary, we would be, and I hope we are, *in every respect, approving ourselves* to all that see and know us, such *as* they ought to be, who have the honour of being *the ministers* and ambassadors *of God;* in this view we govern the inmost emotions of our souls, endeavouring to possess them *in much patience, in* the midst of all the *afflictions* which his providence calls us to bear, *in* all the *necessities* we are compelled to endure, *in* all the *straits* to which we are at any time reduced, and all the anguish of heart we may unavoidably feel in them [b]. This steady patience we endeavour to maintain, *in stripes* when we are scourged in synagogues and cities as if we were the most notorious offenders against God and men, and the vilest pests of society; *in imprisonments*, though we not only endure so many hardships in our confinement, but are cut off by it from those public labours for the glory of God and the edification of the church, which are dearer to us than our lives; *in tumults* [c], which are raised against us by Jews and Gentiles, and by which our enemies are often endeavouring to tear us in pieces: *in labours*, which we incessantly pursue, either in our ministerial work, or in those secular callings by which we are often obliged to earn our daily bread; *in watchings*, when in prosecution of these various employments, the hours of the night are added to those of the day, and

2 Cor. VI. 4.

4 But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,

5 In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings,

a *Give no offence*, &c.] This clause is so connected with the foregoing, that it would have been highly expedient to have continued the preceding *section*, at least to the end of this; but the length would be inconvenient. And there are some other instances, in which we have been forced to yield to necessity on such occasions; but the common division, which separates the last *verse* of the 5th *chapter* from the first of the 6th, seems yet more improper. To render the beginning of the *section* less apparently abrupt, I render that, *we give no offence*, which had more literally been translated by the participle, *giving*, &c. as in the following clauses: but such *little* variations, as they affect not the sense, will I hope be excused, as what on my plan I knew not how to avoid.

b *Afflictions—necessities—straits.*] Dr. Whitby thinks, the first word, θλιψις, signifies *affliction* in general—the second, αναγκη, more *grievous* and unavoidable troubles—and the third, στενοχωρια, such *pressures* as reduce us to the greatest straits: the compound sense therefore on the whole is, we are, as it were hemmed in with *inevitable*, and humanly speaking, *inextricable calamities*, on every side. Compare *sect.* vii. *note* c.

c *In tumults:* ακαταστασιαις.] Beza interprets this, (and I think no man seems better to have understood the peculiar propriety of *Greek* words,) of such *attacks* as a man cannot stand against, but which bear him hither and thither by violence; he would render it in *Latin*, *Exagitationibus.*

SECT. X.

and we have hardly time for our necessary repose ; *in fastings*, to which, besides those which devotion chooses, we are often obliged to submit, for want of proper supplies of food :

2 Cor. VI. 5.

6 Yet still, in the midst of all these difficulties, conducting ourselves, *in* unspotted *purity*, labouring to improve daily *in* the *knowledge* [d] of those Divine truths which it is our great business to teach others, and by the exercise of a constant command over our passions, to grow *in long-suffering* and *in gentleness*, and every other amiable disposition which we cultivate *in* humble dependence on the sanctifying influences of *the Holy Spirit ;* who dwells *in* our hearts, as a continued principle of that *undissembled* love which we exercise without limitation, not only to friends and benefactors, but

6 By pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned,

7 enemies and persecutors. Still we are faithful in asserting, and zealous *in* propagating, *the* sacred gospel, that *word of* uncorrupted and infallible *truth ;* and we persist *in* it, supported by *the* almighty *power of* that *God* by whom it is revealed, and by whom we know it shall be rendered finally victorious ; and in the mean time, while our enemies assault us on every side, it is our care still to be clothed and girded about *with the armour of righteousness*, both *on the right-hand, and on the left* [e] ; well knowing that

7 By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,

8 armour to be impenetrable. And in this consciousness we pass unhurt, and in a great measure unmoved, *through honour and dishonour*, *through evil report and good report*, neither elated with the one, nor depressed and dejected with the other. We are treated by many, *as* if we were a set of artful *deceivers*, that scruple no fraud and falsehood, by which we might carry our cause ; and *yet* we know in our own conscience

8 By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report : as deceivers, and *yet* true ;

d *By knowledge.*] Interpreters give many different senses of this word. Dr. Scott says it signifies *prudence*, which is a Christian virtue, whereas the mere understanding of Divine things was a *gift*. Mr. Pyle thinks it signifies their *improving* the knowledge of Divine mysteries. Mr. Cradock refers it to an acquaintance with the true *sense* of scripture ; which brings it to much the same with what has been called the *word of knowledge*. I conclude it implies not only a solicitude to grow in the knowledge of the gospel, but to *improve* that knowledge to the edification of others ; which accordingly is expressed in the *paraphrase*.

e *Armour of righteousness, on the right-hand, and on the left.*] Some unnaturally think this alludes to the *soldiers* who were taught to wield their swords with the left-hand, as well as the right ; and others, that it refers to the Christians being armed against the temptations of prosperity and adversity. That may well be included ; but the armour spoken of, seems of the *defensive* kind, on the arms, or breast, or both.

science, and God can witness for us, that we are *true* and faithful, and would not deviate from the strictest rules of integrity, to carry any point, how important soever it might seem to ourselves, or the religion we propagate. We are treated by men, *as* inconsiderable creatures, in the lowest rank of life, obscure and *unknown*, as undeserving any public notice and regard; and [*yet*] we are really *well known* to multitudes, by the happiest tokens, as the men by whom they have not only received that bodily healing, which they could never have expected from natural means, but by the yet more valuable memorials of having enlightened their eyes with Divine knowledge, and brought back their wandering souls to God. We are regarded by others, *as dying* men, and we seem ourselves to be in daily danger of being sacrificed to the rage of our enemies; and *yet behold* hitherto, through the guardian and astonishing care of that Redeemer whom we preach, *we* continue in life, and *live* to the most important purposes. Our afflictions are many, and we consider ourselves under them, *as chastened* by our heavenly father; *yet*, blessed be his name, we are *not killed*; and far from intending our destruction, we know that he will over-rule these chastisements to the advancement of our salvation. If our external circumstances alone be regarded, we must indeed appear *as sorrowful*, and the world will naturally conclude, that we have cause for continual lamentation; and *yet* when the inward dispositions of our minds are known, and the views with which we are secretly supported, it will be found that we are *always rejoicing*, in the present assurances of the Divine favour, and the certain expectation of complete felicity and eternal glory. We appear *as poor* in this world, and indeed we are so; having neither silver nor gold, nor estate; and *yet* we are continually *enriching many*, with treasures, which they would not part with for all the revenues of princes and kings; *as having nothing* that we can call our own; and *yet*, indeed *possessing all things*; which we know to be ours, so far as our heavenly Father shall see fit; and therefore are as

SECT. X

2 Cor. VI. 8.

9 As unknown, and *yet* well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and not killed;

9

10 As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich: as having nothing, and *yet* possessing all things.

10

SECT. X.

as easy and as happy if we were actually the proprietors of the whole world [f].

IMPROVEMENT.

WHOSE soul can remain untouched, while he reads this eloquent period in which the *apostle's mouth* is (as he afterwards expresses it) thus *opened*, in consequence of his *heart's being enlarged!* In how lively, yet unaffected a manner, does this sacred *writer* paint his own character and circumstances: and how much profound and important sense is there in those *paradoxes* which he so naturally introduces on this occasion! Let the *ministers* of the *gospel* herein behold, at once, their model and their support.

Ver. 3 Let them cultivate this *inoffensive behaviour*, not only out of regard to themselves, but that their office may not be censured; and still *approve* themselves the servants of God, *by patience* amidst all their *tribulations*, their *necessities*, and their *pressures*; 4 and, so far as their circumstances require it, *by labours, by watchings, and fastings*; especially when by an indulgent providence 5 they are not called to do it *in stripes, in imprisonments*, and *in tu-* 6 *mults*. Still let them cultivate *purity and knowledge, long-suf-* 7 *fering and gentleness, with unfeigned love in the Holy Ghost*. Aided by him, let them arm themselves with the *word of truth*, and in the strength of God, gird on the *armour of righteousness* 8 *on the right hand and on the left*. Thus fortified, they may boldly break their way through *honour and infamy*, through *praise and reproach*; as we plainly see that infamy and reproach may be the portion of the best of men, and the most useful members of society. Who are we, that we should refuse a cup, of which the 8 *apostles* and our *Lord* drank so deep? But let us be superior to human censures. If any call *us deceivers*, let us show that we are 9 invariably *true* to the interests of God and of goodness. If they affect to overlook us, *as unknown*, and beneath their notice, let us endeavour to render ourselves *well known*, by the benefits 10 which, by Divine grace, we are the instruments of conferring on men's souls. So shall we be always *rejoicing* in the midst of those *sorrows* of which nature cannot be entirely insensible; whilst amidst our *poverty* we are *enriching many*, yea then, though we have *nothing* that we can call our own, we shall *possess all things*; shall appear in the eyes of *God*, and of the Lord *Jesus Christ*, the richest and the happiest of mankind, even though we were in other respects, *of all men the most miserable*.

While

[f] *Possessing all things.*] This is certainly one of the sublimest passages that was ever writ. Compare Phil. iv. 18. 1 Tim. vi. 17. Eph. i. 3. Rev. xxi. 7. 1 Cor. iii. 21—23.

While we consider this as the character of the first preachers of *Christianity*, which, with so noble a plainness and simplicity they profess, let us adore the Divine grace by which such a spirit was raised in the world, and by which it hath in some measure been maintained, even to this day. And let it encourage our most earnest and affectionate prayers, that God would raise up in every age (and especially in our own, in which they seem so ready to fail) a generation of *evangelical ministers:* who, fired with such generous principles of action, and emulating so noble a character, may *commend themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God*, and roll away that reproach which unworthy men have brought on the most excellent of all offices. Thus armed, may they extend their happy conquests; thus animated, may they *see of the travail of their soul*, to their abundant, their everlasting satisfaction and delight.

SECT. X. Ver. 10

SECT. XI.

The Apostle urges the Corinthians to avoid those alliances with idolaters, which might tend to ensnare them; and pleads the gracious promises God had made to his people, as an engagement to them to be upon their guard in this respect; and, in general, to aim at the sublimest attainments in religion. 2 Cor. VI. 11, *to the end.* Chap. VII. 1.

2 Cor. VI. 11. O YE Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged.

2 CORINTHIANS VI. 11.

SECT. XI. 2 Cor. VI. 11.

YOU see, *O ye Corinthians*, my dear brethren, my beloved children, with how much freedom of address *our mouth is opened to you;* but words flow freely on an occasion, on which *our heart is* so much *enlarged*, in a tenderness, which neither words nor tears can sufficiently express. Sure I am, that *ye are* 12 *not straitened in us;* all that we can do for your comfort and happiness, you may securely promise yourselves: *but* I fear, *ye are straitened in your own bowels*, and have not all of you, that affection for us, nor readiness to receive our communications, which the relation between us might challenge, and my tenderness for you ought to excite. And *therefore, for that very* 13 *recompence*, which we most of all desire, which is so just and reasonable, and which indeed, in its consequences, would be yet more beneficial to you, than delightful to us, *I speak* to you *as to* [*my*] own *children*, with all the genuine overflowings of paternal love; *be ye*

12 Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels.

13 Now for a recompence in the same, (I speak

SECT. xi.

also thus *enlarged*[a] towards me, and let this confidence with which I am pouring forth, as it were, all my heart into your bosom, strike strongly on your minds, to raise some correspondent emotion.

speak as unto *my* children,) be ye also enlarged.

2 Cor. VI. 13.

14 And how shall that love be expressed? Truly by no method can it more effectually be manifested, than by taking all the care you possibly can, for your own security and happiness. In which view, I must particularly urge it, that ye *be not unequally yoked* either in marriage, or any other intimate friendship, *with unbelievers; for what participation hath* that strict *righteousness*, to the practice of which the gospel calls you, its sincere votaries, *with* that *unrighteousness*, in which they are so generally plunged? *Or what communion hath* the *light*, into which you by the Divine mercy are brought, *with* that deplorable *darkness* of ignorance and vice in which they 15 continue to be lost? *Or what concord* [*is there*,] or can there be, *between Christ*, to whom ye are united, *and Belial*, who reigneth in the children of disobedience? *Or what part hath a believer with an infidel;* or an infidel, with a believer? The union is surely, at the first view of it, too unnatural to be either easy, safe or 16 lasting? *And* indeed I may say, *what consistence has the temple of God*[b] *with* those detestable *idols*, which would by this means be, as it were, erected in it: or at least placed so near, that it must be polluted by them? It is a proper question, and a just view in which to state the point; *for ye are the temple of the living God, as God* himself *hath said; I will*, in the most intimate manner, *dwell in them*[c], *and walk among* [*them*], *and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.* (Lev. xxvi. 12.) Now though this immediately refers to God's extraordinary presence

14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial; or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them;* and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

a *Be ye also enlarged.*] Perhaps the *apostle's* meaning may be this, "Give me that pleasure which my paternal tenderness towards you will find, in having it in my power to do you abundance of good, through your readiness to receive what we are so ready to impart, and to fall in with my attempts of usefulness among you."

b *Temple of God.*] There seems a peculiar *strength* in this *interrogation.* If God would not endure *idols* in any part of the land in which he dwelt, how much less would he endure them under his own roof?

c In the most intimate manner *dwell in them.*] No words I know in our language, can equal the force of the original, ἐνοικεσω εν αυτοις, *I will take up my indwelling in them.* This was a promise made to the Jews on their being converted; and consequently refers to their privileges, as members of the Christian church; which shews the propriety of the application, Jer. xxxi. 33, chap. xxxii. 37, 38.

sence among the Jews, yet, when we consider the constitution of the Christian church, we cannot possibly imagine, that God is less favourably present with it, than he was with the Jewish. We may *therefore* consider the exhortation so naturally grounded on such a promise, and may, as it were, hear God calling to us, and saying, as to Israel, with respect to idolaters of old, (Isa. lii. 11.) *Come out from among them, and be ye separate*[d], *saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and*, if ye behave in a manner thus worthy your professed relation to me, *I will* then *receive you*, which, till then, I cannot do; *And will be a father unto you*[e], *and ye shall be to me for sons and for daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.* Now surely if the Almighty God will say thus unto us, we ought to be much affected with it, and neglect nothing that is necessary to insure so great and invaluable a privilege. *Having therefore*, my *beloved* brethren, *such* gracious *promises* of God's abode among us, his dwelling in us, and his adopting us into the number of his children, let us act worthy so high a relation; and as God is perfectly holy, *let us* labour to the utmost to *purify ourselves from all pollution*, both *of the flesh and of the spirit*, from every impurity of life, and from every sensual affection, which might defile our hearts, and render them displeasing to him. Nor let us rest merely in this negative view of religion; but let us endeavour to be *perfecting holiness*, and lay the foundation of it *in the fear of God*, in whose presence we always are, and by whom all our actions are examined, and to whom our hearts are open; well knowing, that we cannot secure to ourselves these blessings, without such a care; and that it is what gratitude most powerfully dictates, where we have the highest hopes that we are interested in them.

SECT. XI.

2 Cor. VI. 16.

17 Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

17

18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

18

2 Cor. VII. 1. Having, therefore, these promises (dearly beloved,) let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

2 Cor. VII. 1.

IMPROVE-

d *Be ye separate.*] As God's promise of dwelling in a peculiar manner among the Jews, obliged them to separate themselves from the converse of their *heathen* neighbours, that they might not be ensnared with their superstitions; much more are Christians obliged by that peculiar gracious presence of God which they enjoy, to separate themselves from all impure and idolatrous worship. Exod. xxix. 45, 46. Lev. xxvi. 11, 12.

e *I will be a father*, &c.] It is queried where God says this? Some answer, Jer. xxxi. 1. But that does not sufficiently express the paternal relation. Others refer to 2 Sam. vii. 8, 14, which may be applied to Christ, and, in him, to believers. Compare Heb. i. 4, 5. Some think, it is not expressly to be found any where, and that it refers to all the scriptures where God calls his people by the title of *children*.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. xi. THUS may cordial love *open the mouth of Christian ministers,* when addressing their people; and thus may the love of *Chris-*
Ver. *tians* to each other in every station of life express itself, and
11 produce *for a recompense* a mutual *enlargement.* This is one of
12 the sweetest pleasures; and richest blessings of friendship, when wisely and happily contracted. Let us therefore cultivate such friendships, and be very careful, that we do not form others,
14--16 which may properly be called, being *unequally yoked.* We profess to be pursuing *righteousness,* to be *light* in the Lord, to be united to *Christ,* to be consecrated to *God:* let us not then have an intimate converse with the slaves of *unrighteousness,* the children of *darkness,* the sons of *Belial,* the votaries of *idols.* Far from subjecting ourselves to such dangerous snares, let us rather be earnestly seeking every advantage for making the noblest im-
Chap. vii. 1. provements in religion. Let us examine our lives and our hearts, that we may be *cleansed from all pollutions of the spirit, as well as of the flesh.* Let us labour after sublime ideas of the *perfection of holiness,* and after a temper of mind correspondent to those ideas. In order to attain which, let us often be surveying our
Chap. vi. high and glorious privileges, and those exceeding rich and *pre-*
17--18 *cious promises,* which God by his gospel is making to us; *separating* ourselves from all evil, *that he may receive us,* that he may *dwell with us,* and *walk among us,* that he may consecrate us as a holy *temple* to himself; yea, that the *Lord Almighty* may become a *Father* to us, and own us for *his sons* and *his daughters.* To us is the word of this promise sent, this is the hope of our calling: let us make it sure, let us daily survey it, that it may produce and cherish a correspondent sanctity and zeal. Amen.

SECT. XII.

The Apostle farther expresses his affections to the Corinthians, as illustrated by the pleasure with which he received good tidings from them by Titus, and by the part he took in the sorrows which his necessary reproofs had occasioned, and his present joy in that these sorrows had issued in their reformation. 2 Cor. VII. 2, *to the end.*

SECT. xii. 2 CORINTHIANS VII. 2.

2 Cor. VII. 2. BUT to return from this digression, to the attempt I was making to remove some prejudices,

2 Cor. VII. 2. RECEIVE us: we have wronged no man,

2 Cor. VII. 2.

judices, which, much to your own detriment, I know that some of you have imbibed against my person and ministry. Give me leave, my brethren, to intreat you, that ye *receive us* with that affection which is due to the faithful servants of Christ, and to those who have been instruments in your conversion and edification: for, whatever may have been insinuated by ill-designing persons to the contrary, *we have injured no man* in his person, *we have corrupted no man* in his morals, *we have defrauded no man*[a] in his property, by any of those artifices which covetousness sometimes practises under very solemn forms.

man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man.

3 I speak not this to condemn *you:* for I have said before, that you are in our hearts to die and live with *you.*

I speak not [*this*] *to condemn* [*you*] of ingratitude, or infidelity, though I have been obliged to find some fault with you; *for I have told you before, that ye are in our hearts* with such tenderness, that if it were the will of God, we could be glad both *to live and to die with* [*you;*] to spend the remainder of our lives at Corinth, or to end them there, did not the purposes of our master's glory call to other, and many of them less grateful and agreeable scenes. 3

4 Great *is* my boldness of speech toward you, great *is* my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.

Great, as you see, [*is*] *my freedom of speech to you*, upon this subject; and *great* is also *my boasting concerning you*, as to the assurance which I have of your regards for me; and, on this account, *I am filled with consolation* at the remembrance of you; *I* do *exceedingly abound*[b] *in joy, in* the midst of *all our affliction*, when I think how well you behave, and how happy an alteration is prevailing among you. 4

5 For when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without *were* fightings, within *were* fears.

An instance of this affectionate regard I have lately had an opportunity deeply to feel, and very naturally to manifest: *for when we came into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted in every* [*place*] and circumstance, through the rage and malice of our enemies; yet these alarms could not cause us to forget you; but while *without* there [*were*] continual *fightings*, with the most furious and cruel opposition, *within* there were *fears* and anxieties on your account. 5

6 Nevertheless, God that comforteth those that

But the blessed *God, who* is pleased to wear it among his other titles, that he *is the Comforter of those who are brought low* by affliction 6

a *Defrauded no man.*] The word επλεονεκτησαμεν, signifies to indulge a *covetous* temper, and make a *prey* of others by it; and perhaps intimates, that the false teachers, of whom he had so much reason to complain, had done it.

b *Exceedingly abound.*] The word υπερπερισσευομαι, has an inexpressible energy; and is, if I mistake not, a word of the *apostle's* own making.

c *However*

SECT. xii.

tion and distress, and owns it as his prerogative, to bear up the human heart, *comforted us by the coming of Titus;* who arrived so seasonably at
2 Cor. VII. 6. Macedonia, at a time when both our circumstances and frame of spirit needed all the assistance that so pious and delightful a friend could
7 give. *And* indeed it was *not merely by his coming*, that I was thus comforted; *but with the consolation with which he was comforted by you, when he told us* particularly *of your earnest desire* to rectify whatever was amiss, and of *your grief* for what had been matter of offence to God, and sorrow to me, and of *your* affectionate *zeal for me, so that I rejoiced much more* than in other
8 circumstances I could have done. *Because* now I can take the liberty to say, that *if I grieved you in the epistle* which I formerly wrote, in which indeed I was obliged to treat some subjects with greater severity than I could have wished, *I do not repent* of it, *however anxious I might before have been*[c]; for the regret I at first felt on that account, is now swallowed up in that superior pleasure with which I see the happy effects of it; *for I* now have the satisfaction to *find, that this epistle, however for a little while* it might have *grieved you*, hath by the blessing of God, been productive of great good.
9 And *now I rejoice, not that ye were grieved*, for that will always give me concern when I reflect upon it; *but that ye grieved* to such happy purpose, and were by that means brought *to* true *repentance*, to a change of mind; *for* this was indeed the case, as *ye were grieved with a* penitential and humble *regard to* the honour of the blessed *God*, which is so immediately and peculiarly affected by the irregularities of those that profess themselves his people. *So that* on the whole, *ye were not in any degree endamaged by us;* but on the contrary received, as we intended, great benefit by the severity we
10 were compelled to use. *For* this is indeed the natural effect of a sorrow like yours; that *grief, which*

that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus:

7 And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more.

8 For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though *it were* but for a season.

9 Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.

10 For godly sorrow worketh

c *However anxious I might before have been: ει και μεταμελομαι.*] So I chose to render the word, as μεταμελεια strictly expresses an *after care* and anxiety for any thing that has been done; whereas the word *repent* always signifies a wish it had not been done. Now as what St. Paul did, in writing the former epistle, was *proper*, and done under the direction of the Divine *Spirit*, it does not seem reasonable to suppose that he *really repented* of it. It may also signify a kind of *misgiving* of heart, natural, when the reproof, however necessary, is given to a person one tenderly loves, where the event is dubious, as in this instance it might be.

d Yea

worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

which regards the honour of *God*, and takes its rise from such tender and grateful views of him, as we before hinted, *worketh* a *repentance*, which leads *to salvation*, and assures in it; and therefore is *never* afterwards *to be repented of; whereas the sorrow* that arises merely from a regard to the things *of the world*, is often a foolish excess, productive of fatal consequences, and sometimes *worketh death;* either breaking the heart, arming men against their own lives, or otherwise producing that rebellion against God, by which the soul is finally destroyed. But it is pleasant to trace the happy effects of that better principle which hath influenced you; *for behold this same thing*, that is, *your being grieved* for your sins *out of* a pious *respect to God*, and the dishonour it brought upon him, *what diligence it wrought in you* to reform what had been amiss; *yea*, [*what*] a solicitous care, to make the best *apology* you could for what you had done; and of the sounder part, to make their innocence appear, *yea*, [*what*] *indignation* did it produce against those who had given the offence; *yea*, [*what*] *fear*, lest any thing of that sort should be encouraged and repeated; *yea*, [*what*] *earnest desire* of seeing me again, and confirming our friendship in surer bonds; *yea*, [*what*] *zeal* in every method that could be subservient to these views; *yea*, indeed, if I may so express myself, [*what*] *revenge*[d], against yourselves for those things, which, all circumstances considered, you could not but condemn; against sin, as your great enemy; so that *upon the whole*, considering you as a society, *you have approved yourselves to be pure in this matter*, and there is no farther stain remaining on the church, where I was so much afraid of lasting infamy and reproach. Let it not *therefore* be the cause of any farther distress; but assure yourselves, that *if I have written* [*any thing*] *to you*, different from what I could wish to write, and you to receive, [*it was*] *not* so much with any personal views, *on his account, who had done, or his who had received the injury*[e] *but for the sake*

SECT. xii.

2 Cor. VII. 10

11 For behold, this self-same thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you; yea, *what* clearing of yourselves; yea, *what* indignation; yea, *what* fear; yea, *what* vehement desire; yea, *what* zeal; yea, *what* revenge! in all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

11

12 Wherefore though I wrote unto you, *I did it* not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of

12

d *Yea* [*what*] *revenge.*] Mr. Gataker has very well observed here, that Calvin and Reynolds, and some other divines of note, have been misled, by taking it for granted, that these *verses* contain seven *distinct marks* of true repentance, to be found in every sincere penitent; whereas indeed these are not characters of the temper of each, but of *different* persons in different circumstances, according to the part they respectively acted in the affair in question.

e *Received the injury.*] Hence some infer, and it seems reasonable, that *the father*

SECT. XII.

sake of manifesting our diligence and care *for you* which through the Divine goodness hath now been made apparent, though by so severe and painful a trial, *before God* [*and*] *unto you.* *Therefore we were* greatly *comforted in your consolation, and we rejoiced more exceedingly in the joy of* good *Titus*, which gave me a pleasure yet greater than he himself could derive from it; *because* we find your temper and state so good, that *his spirit was refreshed by you all. So that* on the whole, *if I had boasted any thing of you to him*, that I was confident my Corinthian friends would approve themselves worthy of the figure they had formerly made in religion, *I was not ashamed* of that boasting; *but as we have always spoken in the* exactest regard to *truth*, when addressing ourselves *to you, so also our boasting* [*concerning you*] *to Titus*, that all would be well again at Corinth, *has been verified*, greatly to our satisfaction: *So that his tenderest affections are* now *engaged towards you exceedingly*, which he expresses in the most genuine manner *whenever he* mentions, or *recollects the obedience of you all* in general to those apostolical injunctions which I sent you by him: [*and*] *how you received him* as my messenger, and the minister of Christ, *with fear and trembling*, expressing always the most solicitous concern, that he might see nothing which it might grieve him to observe, or me to hear reported by him. *I rejoice therefore, that in every respect I have confidence in you* [f], and am encouraged to renew that honourable testimony which it has always been my pleasure to bear to your character, and which, I assure myself, you will continue more and more to deserve.

2 Cor. VII. 13–16

of God might appear unto you.

13 Therefore we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all.

14 For if I have boasted any thing to him of you, I am not ashamed; but as we speak all things to you in truth, even so our boasting which *I made* before Titus, is found a truth.

15 And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling you received him.

16 I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all things.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 3 How great is the boldness of a good conscience! and how much does it promote that freedom, that authority, with which the *ministers of Christ* address themselves to their hearers, when they can thus appeal to them as to the uprightness, integrity

ther of the incestuous person was still living; which must be a great aggravation of his crime.

f *Confidence in you.*] The address of all this part of the *epistle* is wonderful. This in particular, finely introduces what he had to say in the following *chapter*, and is strongly illustrated by chap. ix. 2—4.

tegrity, and disinterestedness of their conduct! Frequently do we, in some degree, share the trials of the apostle; and while we may be surrounded with *fightings without*, are exercised with *fears within*; but we have a *God*, who assumeth it to himself as one of his titles, that *he comforteth those that are cast down*, and brought low. May every sincere lover of Christ, and of souls, be *filled with consolation* from him, and amidst all his tribulations, whatever they are, be made to *rejoice exceedingly* in the joy of his Christian friends and converts! May he trace in them the marks of that *true repentance* which is *never to be repented of*, and which is represented in such genuine language, as no heart could have dictated, but one that had felt what is here described. And since there is *not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not;* and consequently none who needeth not repentance, may we all know by experience, that *diligence*, that *indignation*, that *fear*, that *zeal*, that *desire*, that *revenge*, which the apostle saw in his Corinthian brethren, and which he rejoiced so much to see! There is not a surer office of friendship, than to endeavour to promote this *godly sorrow*. And O, how blessed, how divine a principle is religion, whose most painful operation is productive of so much inward and substantial happiness! whereas the *sorrow of this world*, to which they who fondly love the world, and eagerly pursue it, are most exposed, is attended with such fatal consequences, as even *to work death*.

SECT. xii.

Ver. 5 6 4 10 11 9

Let us observe with pleasure the address of St. Paul, to make the Corinthians what they ought to be, by representing to them that pleasing confidence he reposed in them, the manner in which he had even boasted of them, and the satisfaction he found in all their first tendencies towards a reformation of remaining defects. And let us earnestly pray for the Spirit of wisdom, that our hearts may be happily attempered to such due mixtures of faithful inspection, resolute sincerity, and endearing tenderness, with respect to all who are committed to our care, whether in offices of a public or private nature, as may most effectually promote their advancement in the Divine life, and our own abundant joy.

10 14, 16 13

SECT. XIII.

The apostle enters on the subject of the contribution he was setting forward for the relief of the poor Christians of Judea, recommends to the Corinthians the example of the Macedonians, reminds them of the great grace of our blessed Redeemer, and gives some advice as to the manner of collecting and transmitting their bounty. 2 Cor. VIII. 1—15.

SECT. xiii.

2 Cor. VIII. 1.

2 CORINTHIANS VIII. 1.

NOW *we* think it proper, *brethren*, to *inform you* of the happy and honourable effects of that abundant communication *of the grace of God*[a] which has been mercifully *bestowed upon the churches* planted here *in Macedonia*, at Philippi, Thessalonica, Berœa, and other places in this province: which has engaged them to exert themselves in a most liberal and generous contribution for the relief of the poor saints in
2 Judea. And here it would be a pleasure to me more particularly to tell you, *how in a great* and extraordinary *trial of affliction*, which they met with from their persecuting enemies, who were always so ready to harass and plunder them (compare Acts xvi. chap. xvii.) *their overflowing joy* for receiving the Christian religion, *and* with it, if I may so speak, *the depth of their poverty* amidst these distresses of their own, *hath* so *abounded* and furnished such supplies, *to the riches of their liberality*, that indigent as they are, they have done wonders for
3 the relief of their yet poorer brethren. *So that, I* can *testify* for them, and I do attest it with pleasure, *that to* the utmost extent of [*their power; yea, and beyond* what could have been expected, or on the usual principles of computation, judged to have been in [*their*] *power*

2 Cor. VIII. 1. MOREOVER, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia:

2 How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy, and their deep poverty, abounded unto the riches of their liberality.

3 For to *their* power (I bear record) yea, and beyond their power, *they were* willing of themselves:

a *Grace of God.*] As χαρις sometimes signifies a *gift*, and things excellent and extraordinary in their kind are in *Hebrew* often said to be *things of God*, or *Divine*; as *trees of God*, are great and flourishing trees; *cities of God*, great cities, (compare Psalm lxxx. 10. Acts vii. 20,) some have explained, χαριν τω Θεω, as if it signified the *great* or *liberal gift*, which has been given in, or by the Macedonian churches; and Dr. Whitby very sufficiently proves, that χαρις sometimes is put for *gift*. But considering what is the general sense of the word in St. Paul's writings, and what his sentiments evidently are, as to the doctrine of Divine *influences* on the heart, I chose to follow the plainest and most obvious and common interpretation, which indeed I generally think the best, and take this *verse* to be in sense much equivalent to that pious acknowledgement of David, 1 Chron. xxix. 14, *who are we, that we should be able to offer so willingly, &c.*

SECT. XIII.

power [b] [*they have been*] *willing of themselves,* without my solicitation, to do the most generous things for the public service: At the same time *intreating us with much importunity, that we would receive the gift* which their bounty had prepared, *and* [*take*] *a part of the ministration of the saints,* as one of their commissioners to convey it to Jerusalem. *And* [*this they did,*] *not* merely *as we* expected and *hoped, but* even beyond all we could have imagined; for *they first gave themselves,* and all they had, entirely *to* the honour and service of *the Lord; and* having thus surrendered all they were, and all they possessed, to Christ and his cause, they in effect resigned themselves *to us by the will of God,* putting themselves in this respect under my direction, to do what I should in conscience think most adviseable in present circumstances. *Insomuch that,* unable to withstand their pressing solicitation, *we desired Titus, that as he had begun* to do in other places, *so he would also complete this* instance of *grace* and liberality *among you* [c], and finish what yet remains to be done, as to collecting the intended contribution.

2 Cor. VIII. 4.

4 Praying us with much intreaty, that we would receive the gift, and *take upon us* the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

5 And *this they did,* not as we hoped, but first gave their own-selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God:

6 Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also.

Therefore, my brethren, *as ye abound in every* other [*gift*] (1 Cor. i. 4—7. chap. xii. 8—10,) and particularly *in faith,* which rises to the fullest persuasion of the truth of the gospel, and *in* all *utterance* and ability to instruct others, *and in* the clearest *knowledge* of Divine things, *and in all* active *diligence, and in your* affectionate *love to us;* so [*we exhort*] and intreat [*you,*] that ye would take this opportunity of shewing, *that ye abound also in this grace* of Christian liberality. And here, you will observe that *I speak not by* way of *command,* so as to take upon me to determine how much, or in what proportion, ye shall give; *but that I may prove, by* what I have just been saying of *the diligence of others,* that is the Macedonians, *the* genuine *sincerity of your love* in its most substantial effects.

7 Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us; *see* that ye abound in this grace also.

8 I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love.

And I may well expect, that you should exert yourselves on such an occasion, in consequence of

9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus

b *To their power, yea, and beyond that.*] This is a noble *hyperbole,* like that of *Demosthenes,* "I have performed all, even with an industry beyond my power."

c *Complete this grace among you.*] I doubt not, that χαρις here signifies *gift,* or present, or liberality; but I thought, that retaining the word *grace* here, might make the English reader more sensible of the *ambiguity* and *emphasis* of the word usually rendered *grace.*

d *To*

SECT. xiii.

of your acquaintance with the great and most fundamental principles of the gospel, in which you have been so faithfully instructed. *For you know* in some measure, though it is impossible for you fully to know, and distinctly to conceive in its utmost extent, *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich* in the glories of the heavenly world, and in supreme dominion and authority there, *yet for your sakes he became poor, that you through* this *his* voluntary *poverty, might* not only be discharged from that dreadful debt you had contracted to the Divine justice, by which you were become obnoxious to everlasting ruin and condemnation; but that you might also *become rich* in the favour of God, and in the graces of the Holy Spirit now, and at length for ever rich in the treasures and glories of the heavenly world: *And* as I cannot but desire, that the servants of so excellent a Master may *herein* imitate his example, and take the most effectual methods to advance his honour and interest in the world, *I give* [*my*] *advice* to you in general, to dispatch this affair vigorously; *for this is* evidently *expedient for you*, and consistent with what you have already in a manner bound yourselves to, *as you have begun, not only to do something, but* also *to exert yourselves*[d] resolutely and determinately, *a year ago.* I *now therefore* intreat you not to be offended, if I urge you to *complete your undertaking, that according to the readiness* which you expressed *to determine*, and resolve upon this good scheme, *there may also be the accomplishment*, of that determination, *in proportion to what you have.* The smallest contribution from such a principle will be pleasing to God, and most assuredly draw its reward after it; *for if there be first a readiness of mind, according to what a man hath,* [*he is*] *accepted* of God, [*and*] *not according to what he hath not:* a little in proportion to his abilities, is pleasing to God; yea, more pleasing, than it would be, if this proportion were less prudently observed. *I say* [*this*] *not* by any means, *that* [*there should be*] *a rest to others, and affliction to you*, that they should be eased, and you overburdened; *But that of an*

2 Cor. VIII. 9.

10 11 12 13 14

sus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

10 And herein I give *my* advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago.

11 Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as *there was* a readiness to will, so *there may be* a performance also out of that which you have.

12 For if there be first a willing mind, *it is* accepted according to that a man hath, *and* not according to that he hath not.

13 For *I mean* not that other men be eased, and you burdened:

14 But by an equality

d *To exert yourselves.*] It is evident that, το θελειν, is an advance upon, ποιησαι. So that it must signify a *resolute* and *vigorous determination.* Compare 1 Cor. xvi. 2.

c *That*

lity, *that* now at this time your abundance *may be a supply* for their want, that their abundance also may be *a supply* for your want, that there may be equality,

an equality, on just and equitable principles, *your abundance* [*may be*] *at this time*, wisely and happily employed, as [*a supply*] *to their want: that* at some other time, if Providence give the occasion and opportunity, *their abundance also may be* [*so*] *to your want*[e]; *that there may be* such *an equality* in the distribution of the good things of this life, as our mutual relation to each other may require. For the bountiful Providence of God hath furnished them out in such an abundance, and given to some of you such a superfluity, that there is room for a liberal distribution, without injuring the original possessor; and if such a distribution be made, we shall find that, *as it is written* concerning the manna, (Exod. xvi. 18.) *He that* [*had*] *much did not abound*, when all came to be divided, *and he that* [*had*] *little did not lack*[f]; so he that has the greatest abundance of this world, may find necessitous objects enough, and he that is most destitute, will be competently supplied, if his richer brethren do their duty in this respect.

SECT. XIII.

2 Cor. VIII. 14.

15 As it is written, He that *had gathered* much, had nothing over; and he that *had gathered* little, had no lack.

15

IMPROVEMENT.

How peculiarly amiable does the *Christian* liberality of these *Macedonians* appear, when considered as *abounding in a great trial of affliction, and in the depth of their poverty*; yet a poverty, mingled with an abundance of joy, on account of that *rich* and happy state into which the *gospel* had brought them, and the first-fruits of that glorious *inheritance* to which they were entitled by the tenor of it. They were *willing of themselves* to contribute, even *beyond their power*, as persons of common generosity would have estimated it. Nor did they on their dying beds repent such a use of their property, or wish that it had been spent in gratifying their appetites, or hoarded for those they were to leave behind them. Nor do they now regret these liberalities, or complain that their expected *harvest* is perished.

Ver. 1,2

3

Let

e *That their abundance*, &c.] It might seem obvious to object, that the Corinthians were rich and prosperous, the Jews poor and oppressed; so that there was no room to expect that this should happen. But it might be replied, "all human affairs are uncertain; Corinth itself, from great prosperity, had been utterly undone in the Roman war by Memmius some time before: or *particular* persons might be distressed, or the *whole* body of Christians there reduced by persecutions, though their city continued to flourish."

f *He that had much*, &c.] Perhaps nothing could more illustrate the powerful *agency* of the Divine Providence, in events which seem most contingent, than this, that though such different quantities of *manna* were gathered by different persons, yet on an average there should be an *omer* for each.

SECT. XIII.

Let us remember their example for imitation; nor let any, who have a *mite* to spare, be wholly deficient, how low soever their circumstances may be; remembering that gracious complacency, with which, *where there is a willing mind*, the smallest tribute to the treasury of God, is accepted *according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not.* To animate us
Ver. 12 to the most generous efforts of overflowing benevolence, may we
9 ever bear in our mind that *grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*, of which we all *know* something, but which it is impossible we should ever fully know; because it *passeth knowledge:* that grace which engaged him, *when rich, for our sakes to become poor*, that we might be *inriched by his poverty.* What have we that deserves to be called a possession, which we do not hold by an act of Divine bounty and grace?

Let us consider ourselves as under indispensable engagements in consequence of it, to consecrate our *all* to *him*, conscious that our *all* is but a low return for the infinite obligations under which he has laid us. He hath contrived and determined, that *the poor* in some form or another *we should have with us always*, that we may do them good, as a token of our gratitude to him. Let us
15 faithfully aim to supply their need, and he *who hath most*, will have no superfluities to throw away upon the lusts or vanities of life; and he *who hath least*, will *have no* unsupplied *lack:* but the poor will rejoice in the relief of their necessities; and the rich, in the happiest and most delightful use of their abundance.

SECT. XIV.

The Apostle expresses his joy for the readiness of Titus to assist in finishing the collection; and speaks of the honourable character of other Christian brethren, whom he had joined with him in the same commission. 2 Cor. VIII. 16, *to the end.*

2 CORINTHIANS VIII. 16.

SECT. XIV.

BUT while I speak of this collection, which I am desirous of promoting, [*I*] would [*return*] my humble *thanks to God, who gave that*
2 Cor. VIII. 16. same *diligent care for you in the heart of Titus*, and formed him to these generous and Christian
17 sentiments. *For indeed he* not only cheerfully accepted, and *complied with the exhortation* I gave him; *but being more forward* than I thought to have found him, *he went to you* freely *of his own accord*, though he must see that some pressing and peculiar difficulties would attend the undertaking.

2 COR. VIII. 16.

BUT thanks *be* to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you.

17 For indeed he accepted the exhortation; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you.

And

18 And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise *is* in the gospel, throughout all the churches:

19 (And not *that* only, but was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and *declaration of* your ready mind:)

20 Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us;

21 Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

22 And we have sent

SECT. XIV.

And we have also *sent* together *with him, that* excellent Christian *brother*[a] and friend, Luke, *whose praise in the gospel* [*is*] *in all the churches,* on account of the various and eminent services that he has done for the interests of Christianity, wherever his influence has extended, both by his writing and exhortations. *And not only* is he *so*[b] much esteemed on these accounts, *but he was also ordained* and appointed *by* the stretching forth of the hand, in token of the common consent of *the churches*, whom we consulted on this occasion, particularly in Macedonia, *to be our fellow-traveller, with this grace which is* now *administered* and undertaken *by us*, purely *for the glory of the same Lord, and* for [*the declaration of*] *your ready mind*, in which I was desirous to let you know how heartily I concur. 19

2 Cor. VIII. 18.

And we now send him to you, and I have determined to join a man of his excellent character with me; carefully *avoiding this, that any one should blame*, or throw any reflection upon *us*, for the part we may take *in* the management of *this abundance* of your bounty, which is *administered by us;* lest any should be so unjust and cruel as to insinuate, that I have appropriated any part of it to my own use, or to any purpose whatsoever, different from that for which it was originally given: Therein *providing things* decent, *honest* and honourable, *not only before the Lord*, to whom it is our first, and chief care to approve ourselves, *but also before men;* that we may guard as much as possible, against any suspicion of our character, which might hinder our usefulness. *And we have sent with them,* that 20 21 22

a *That brother, &c.*] Some suppose this anonymous, though excellent person, to have been Mark, or Silas, or Barnabas; but I rather, with most *commentators*, suppose it to have been Luke, who certainly attended St. Paul in his journey to Jerusalem. Some object, that the brother here spoken of was sent by St. Paul to Corinth, in company with Titus; whereas Luke went with St. Paul to Troas, and from thence to Corinth, Acts xx. 4, 6. But Dr. Whitby replies, I think with some considerable weight, that it is possible St. Paul might go from Philippi to Corinth, and from thence to Troas, and so persons sent before to prepare his way, might come and bring word to St. Paul that the collection was ready, and go back with him to receive it. See Whitby on chap. ii. 12. Many ancient Christians thought that expression, *whose praise in the gospel is in all the churches*, refers to the universal applause with which St. *Luke's gospel* was every where received; and I have *paraphrased* it so as to include that, though I think the *apostle's* meaning more extensive. See *Gurdon at Boyle's Lect.* p. 432.

b *And not only so.*] This 19th *verse* is to be included in a *parenthesis*, and the continued sense of *verses* 18 and 20 will be, *we have sent that brother—to avoid blame*, &c.

c *The*

SECT. XIV.

that is, with Luke and Titus, *our* other friend, and well-beloved *brother*, Apollos, *whom we have often proved in many* other *affairs, to be* in
2 Cor. VIII. 22. a very extraordinary degree *diligent; but* who will *now*, I doubt not, approve himself *much more diligent*, and exert himself to the utmost in carrying on this collection, *on account of the great confidence* [*I have*] *in you*, as to your goodness and liberality: on which consideration he has changed his resolution against making you a visit; which, while he had any apprehension you might make him an occasion of quarrelling and contending, he would by no means be persuaded to do.

sent with them our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, upon the great confidence which *I have* in you.

23 *And if* [*there be any question*] *concerning Titus*, [*he is*] *my partner and* my *fellow-labourer with respect to you*; one, who sincerely shares my care for you, and is always ready to act in concert with me, in any attempt to correct what is amiss among you, and to promote your improvement in real Christianity. *Or* if the question be [*concerning*] any other of *our brethren*, whom I have mentioned above, [*they are*] *the messengers of the churches*[c], whom several Christian societies have chosen to send about this business; and they are persons of so valuable a character, [*and*] do so great a credit to their profession, that I may not improperly call them *the glory of Christ*
24 in the world. *Shew therefore to them*, I intreat you, *even in the sight of* all *the churches*, to which they are related, and to whom they will undoubtedly make their report concerning you, *the demonstration of your love, and* the reasonableness of *our boasting over you*; that it may appear to be as well founded as I assuredly believe that it is.

23 Whether *any do inquire* of Titus, *he is* my partner, and fellow-helper concerning you: or our brethren *be inquired of, they are* the messengers of the churches, *and* the glory of Christ.

24 Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.

IMPROVE-

c *The messengers of the churches.*] I can think of nothing more unreasonable, than to translate this word, *apostles*; as the *English* word *apostles*, is now by long use appropriated to what is only a part of the signification of the original. As an *apostle of Jesus Christ is* one *sent forth by him*, so *an apostle of any church* must surely signify, one *sent forth by that society*. And if I believed that there was so early as at this time a minister in every church, superior to a common pastor, which the most able advocates for *Diocesan episcopacy* seem not generally to think, I could not imagine it consistent with the dignity and importance of their office, that they should be parted with on such an errand, which any common *deacon* might with sufficient propriety have performed. It is indeed true, that St. Paul was charged with this trust; but then it seems to have been after he had determined on this journey to Jerusalem, and not to have been the occasion of that journey.

IMPROVEMENT.

THE tenderness of *ministers*, in all points, where the comfort and edification of the church is concerned, is indeed matter of the highest moment; and where it is remarkable in its degree, it affords just cause of *thanksgivings* to God: for it is *he* who *puts into their hearts that earnest care*, who excites and maintains every sentiment of benevolence, when they offer themselves *willingly* to any generous and charitable service. It is *grace* that has communicated whatever good is done; and it ought to be ascribed to the glory of the same *Lord* from whom it comes; and it loses much of its value, if it be not directed to this ultimate, this supreme end. SECT. XIV. Ver. 16 17

When the *Corinthians* desired to deposit their alms in the hands of *St. Paul*, they certainly acted a very wise part; as no man living could have rendered them more secure, as to the fidelity or the discretion of the distribution. Yet we see, that *high* as the *Apostle's* character stood, and though he had so often given, and was daily renewing such striking demonstrations both of his wisdom and integrity; yet he would not undertake the trust *alone*, but used all proper methods to approve his exactness in the management thereof, even to strangers; *providing things honest* and laudable, *not only in the sight of God, but of all men.* 20 21

May *ministers* be often thus employed, as the *almoners* of persons richer than themselves, (as their readiness to help the poor in their *temporal* affairs, may greatly promote their usefulnes in *spirituals;*) and may they be found to manage their trust with the like conscious and delicate honour. May they shew a disposition, like that of *St. Paul*, to assist in establishing and advancing the characters of their *younger* brethren, and introducing them into esteem and confidence. Thus will they indeed most effectually strengthen their own hands, and edify and comfort the churches; will prove *the glory of Christ* themselves in the present age, and be the means of raising up others, who may eminently deserve that illustrious title, in succeeding generations. 23

SECT. XV.

The Apostle goes on, with admirable address, farther to urge their liberal contribution; and in the full expectation of it, affectionately recommends them to the Divine blessing. 2 Cor. IX. 1, *throughout.*

2 CORINTHIANS IX. 1.

SECT. XV.

2 Cor. IX. 1.

NOW concerning the ministration intended *to* relieve the necessities of *the saints*, or believing brethren in Judea, *it is superfluous that I should write* largely *to you*, in order to persuade you to the thing itself: it is sufficient, that I give you a transient hint concerning the time and manner of doing what is necessary or proper on this occasion. *For I have known* in former instances, and have now again learnt from Titus, *your* extraordinary *readiness* on this head; *which I* indeed *boast concerning you to the Macedonians, that* all the region of *Achaia*, and particularly your church in its capital city, *has been prepared a year ago; and your zeal* in this respect *hath quickened many* others to imitate your example, and do more generously than perhaps they might otherwise have done. *Nevertheless, I have sent* unto you *the brethren* I mentioned before; *lest our boasting of you on this head, that, as I said, ye were prepared* before, having made up your sum, *should*, by any accident which might have prevented your accomplishing the whole of your design, in any degree *be made vain*, and appear ill-grounded; *Lest if* any of *the Macedonians happen to come with me, and* after all, *find you unprepared*, the money which has been subscribed not being actually collected, *we may be ashamed, not to say you also, in this confident boasting* we have used concerning you, and which may recoil in a very unhappy manner, if it be not answered. *Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren* I have mentioned, *that they should come to you* some time *before* my arrival, *and should first complete your bounty which has been spoken of before*[a] so largely

2 Cor. IX. 1.

FOR as touching the ministring to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you:

2 For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many.

3 Yet have I sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf: that, as I said, ye may be ready:

4 Lest haply if they of Macedonia come with me, and find you unprepared, we (that we say not, you) should be ashamed in this same confident boasting.

5 Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before,

[a] *Your bounty which has been spoken of before.*] We render προκαλημγελμενην *whereof ye had notice before.* But I suppose it refers to St. Paul's having spoken of it to the *Macedonian Christians*, *verse* 2.——I think πλεονεξιαν here signifies a kind of *extortion*, by which money is, as it were, wrung from covetousness, by such *obstinacy*

before, that the same might be ready, as *a matter of* bounty, and not as *of* covetousness.

ly to them; *that* so on the whole, *it may be* entirely *ready* and may appear, *as* what I doubt not but it is, the effect of free and cheerful *bounty, and not* look *like* a sort of *extortion*, wrung from you by mere dint of importunity. *And as to this*, it is an important maxim, which I could wish that Christians might always keep in mind. That *he who soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he who soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully;* God will bestow rewards, proportionable to what is given, and to the temper from which it proceeds. With this hint, I leave it to every one to judge for himself, what he shall give, and how much seed he shall throw into this grateful and fruitful soil. SECT. XV. 2 Cor. IX. 5. 6

6 But this I *say*, He which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, *so let him give*; not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver.

Whatever it be, more or less, let it be given with a good will, and a good grace; *every man as he chooseth in his own heart, not as* proceeding *from grief or necessity*, as if he were sorry to part with his money, and were laid under a kind of constraint to do it: *for God loveth a cheerful giver;* and nothing that is contributed, can possibly be acceptable to him without that truly liberal disposition. 7

8 And God *is* able to make all grace abound towards you; that ye always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.

And lest you should fear, that your charity should bring you into wants and straits, I intreat you to consider, that *God [is] able to make all grace* and bounty of every kind *to abound towards you* [b], so that all your liberality shall accrue to your advantage, and you shall be supplied with abundant matter for future charity; *that having always all sufficiency in all things, ye may* go on with new enlargement and vigour of generous resolution, to *abound to every good work*, without finding your circumstances straitened. 8

9 (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor; his righteousness remaineth for ever.

As it is written of the truly liberal and charitable man, (Psal. cxii. 9.) *He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor*, and in consequence of this, *his righteousness endureth for ever;* he shall always have something to bestow. 9

10 Now he that ministereth seed to the sower

We observe in the course of Divine Providence, that God blesseth the increase of the earth so largely, as to suffice for the plentiful nourishment 10

nacy as covetous people themselves use where their own gain is concerned: and thus it is opposed to εὐλογια, what is *readily* given, and comes, as it were, with a *blessing*.

b *All grace to abound*, &c.] Some, by χαρις, understand such liberal providential *supplies* as should furnish out matter of future liberalities; but the more *extensive* sense I have given it, prevents that appearance of a *tautology* in the following clause, which might on that limited interpretation be apprehended.

c *He*

SECT. XV.

ment of men, with a remainder of seed sufficient to furnish the harvest of future years. *And may he, who* thus *supplieth seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply your sowing*[c] *and* largely *increase the productions of your righteousness:* may he so prosper you in all your affairs, that you may have future capacity to exercise that liberal disposition which at present

2 Cor. IX. 10.

sower, both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness ;)

11 appears in this contribution. And I heartily wish, and pray, that you may go on in this laudable and exemplary course, *being in every thing enriched in all* future bounty to be distributed in the *simplicity* of your hearts, with a single eye to the glory of God and the good of your brethren : *which,* in the instance wherein it has already prevailed, *worketh by our means thanksgivings towards God,* both in us who are your almoners to distribute it, and in those indigent

11 Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.

12 Christians who receive it. *For the ministration* and management *of this service*[d], which we have undertaken, and in which we do, as it were, officiate for you in the presentation of this acceptable offering, *doth not only supply the necessities of the saints, but aboundeth through the thanksgivings of many* which it occasions, *to* the

12 For the administration of this service, not only supplieth the wants of the saints, but is abundant also by many thankgivings unto God.

13 glory of *God :* Of many I say, *Who by the experience of this ministration,* this generous contribution, *are glorifying God on account of that subjection to the gospel of Christ which you profess*[e]*; and the simplicity,* and liberality *of your communication towards them, and towards all* others, who are in necessity, and whom you

13 (While by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men ;)

14 have an opportunity of relieving. *And* while they thus glorify God on your account, they are constant and fervent *in their prayers for you, who long after you*[f], and wish earnestly to see and

14 And by their prayer for you which long after you for the exceeding

c *He who supplieth—bread for food, supply and multiply, &c.*] This translation is exactly literal, and gives an easier sense than our *English* version. There should be a *comma,* as Beza justly observes, after εις βρωσιν, agreeably to the rendering of the Syriac and Arabic. See *Beza in loc.* and *Wolf.* who refers to Isa. lv. 10.

d *This service.*] This use of the word λειτουργια intimates, that it was to be considered, not merely as an act of *humanity,* but of *religion,* most pleasing to God, and suitable to the nature of the *gospel dispensation.* Compare Heb. xiii. 16.

e *That subjection to the gospel of Christ which you profess.*] Επι τη υποταγη της ομολογιας υμων εις το ευαγγελιον, expresses not merely *a professed subjection to the gospel,* but a *real* subjection to the *gospel* which was *professed;* which sense I thought it necessary to preserve by a change in the *version.*

f *And in their prayers,* &c.] The construction of the original is something *perplexed* here; and indeed I hardly know any *text* in the *Greek Testament* which is more so. But on the whole, I am ready to prefer the reading of δοξαζοντων, instead of δοξαζοντες, (which Chrysostom followed ;) and suppose both δοξαζοντων and επιποθουντων, to agree with ωσαυτως, and then the sentence might be rendered *this ministration produces*

exceeding grace of God in you.

and know you, *on account of the exceeding grace of God which is in you,* and which produces fruits so highly ornamental to Christianity. SECT. XV.

2 Cor. IX. 15.

15 Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.

When I think of these things, I desire sincerely to bless God on your account, for all the grace he hath given you, and for all the usefulness with which he is pleased to honour you. But I would trace up all to what is indeed the fountain of all his other mercies to us, his having bestowed upon us his dear and only begotten Son. *Thanks,* daily and everlasting thanks, [*be*] ascribed *to* our Father and our *God, for* that *his unutterable gift*[g], of the excellence, importance, and grace, of which neither men or angels can worthily speak, or conceive.

IMPROVEMENT.

HAPPY shall we be, if we learn this pious and evangelical turn of thought; if by all the other gifts of God we are thus led up to the first and greatest gift of his love and mercy. From that surely we may encourage our hopes, of whatever else is necessary and desirable; *for he that spared not his Son, but delivered him up for us all,* how is it possible, that he should not be ready, *with him, freely to give us all things* that are truly good for us! Ver. 15

Let us observe with pleasure the happy address of the apostle; 2 a felicity, not the result of craft, but of that amiable temper that was so natural to him. He pleads the high opinion he had entertained of his Corinthian friends, the *honourable things* he had said of them; expressing his persuasion of their readiness to give 5 as matter of bounty, not of constraint. He leads them to the inexhaustible store of the *Divine liberality,* from which they had received their present all; from which he wishes they may receive more and more; and this, not that these supplies might be ignobly consumed in self-gratification, but employed in acts of the noblest

produces an abundance of thanksgiving to God for many, who glorify him for your subjection to the gospel, &c. and in their prayer, that is, while they are praying, *for you earnestly desire to see you,* &c. But the *paraphrase* here, as in several other places, hath obliged me to break the sentence; which I the more readily did, as amidst this perplexity of *grammar* the design of the sentence is perfectly plain.

g *Unutterable gift.*] If we understand this with Dr. Whitby, in the following sense, I adore God for this *charitable temper* in you, and other sincere Christians, by which God is glorified, the *gospel* adorned, the poor saints are refreshed, and you fitted for an exceeding great reward.———It will be as *remarkable* a text as most in the *bible,* to shew, that *every* good affection in the human heart is to be ascribed to a *Divine* influence. I have therefore included this in the *paraphrase:* but am ready to think the *apostle's* mind, to which the idea of the invaluable *gift* of Christ was so familiar, rather by a strong and natural transition, glanced on *that.*

SECT. XV.

noblest *beneficence.* He represents to them the *thanksgivings* it had already occasioned to God, the *refreshment* it administered to the saints, the honour it did to their character and profession, and the *esteem* and friendship for them which it excited in the minds of those, who, though unacquainted with them, were affected towards their happiness, in consequence of this honourable specimen of their character. Who could withstand the force of such oratory? No doubt it was effectual to cultivate the temper it applauded, and to add a rich abundance to the fruits of their righteousness.

Ver. 7, 8, 9–12, 13

7 Let us apply the thoughts suggested for our own instruction, to excite us to abound in acts of *liberality*, and to present them to God with that *cheerfulness* which he loves. To him let us continually look, to make *all grace abound unto us;* and seek *a sufficiency in all things* relating to the present life, chiefly that we may *be ready to every good work;* that our liberality may still endure, and that the *multiplication of our seed sown may increase the fruits of our righteousness.* To God be the praise of all ascribed!

8, 9, 10 He *ministers seed to the sower;* he *supplies bread for food;* he calls up the blessings of *harvest;* he insures the advantages of *commerce.* May we praise him ourselves; and by the *ready communication* of the good things which he hath given us, to those that want, not only *supply their necessities*, but give them cause to *abound in thanksgiving to God*, as well as in *prayer* for us, while they see and acknowledge that exceeding grace, which is the spring of every generous motion in the human heart; and to which therefore be the glory of all.

11

SECT. XVI.

Some reflections having been thrown on the Apostle for the mildness of his conduct, as if it proceeded from fear, he here proceeds to assert his apostolical power and authority; cautioning his opponents, that they should not urge him to give too sensible demonstrations of it upon themselves. 2 Cor. X. 1, *throughout.*

2 Corinthians X. 1.

SECT. XVI.

2 Cor. X. 1.

I HAVE just *now* been expressing my confidence and joy in your church in general, as well as my affection to it; but I am sensible there are some among you to whom I cannot speak in such a manner; and with regard to such *I Paul myself*, the very man whom they have so often spoken of with contempt and defiance, injured as I am, do yet condescend to *intreat you by*

2 Cor. X. 1.

NOW I Paul myself beseech you, by the

SECT. XVI.

2 Cor. X. 1.

the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence *am* base among you, but being absent am bold toward you.

by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, our condescending and compassionate Saviour, that meekness and gentleness which I have learned from his example, and desire to exercise towards the most unreasonable of my enemies; even I, *who* [*am*] according to your representation, and with respect to my person, *when present, humble among you*[a], and despised for the meanness of my appearance, *but being absent, am bold towards you*, and use so much freedom and authority in my letters; *However* I may be reflected upon, and even insulted on this account; *I beseech you*, I say, as you love yourselves, and tender your own comfort and happiness, *that I may not, when I am* next *present*, be obliged by your continued irregularity to *be bold, with that confidence on which* truly *I think to presume with respect to some, who account of us as* persons *walking in the flesh*, and affect at least to talk, though they have so little excuse for doing it, as if we governed ourselves by low and mercenary views. *For* we are conscious to ourselves, that *though we* do indeed *walk in the flesh*, though we inhabit mortal bodies, and are obliged in some respects to stoop to the care of them, and to do many things for their subsistence, which take up the time we could much more agreeably spend another way; yet God knows, *we do not* manage that important *war* in which we are engaged, *according to the flesh*, by carnal methods, or with worldly and interested views[b]. This you may easily perceive, by the manner in which we are armed; *for the weapons of our warfare* [*are*] *not carnal:* as we depend not on military force, so neither on beauty, stature, eloquence, or philosophy, or in a word, on any thing which might recommend us to human regard; but *though* destitute of these, we are furnished with others much more valuable, by that Divine power, which would never exert itself for the secular advantage of persons professing

2 But I beseech you, that I may not be bold when I am present, with that confidence wherewith I think to be bold against some which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh.

2

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:

3

4 (For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through

4

a *When present, am humble among you.*] Probably they had upbraided, and reflected upon him, in some such language as this; but there was a sense in which he was indeed *lowly* among them, his presence probably having nothing *majestic*.

b *Though we walk in the flesh, &c.*] Mr. Cradock explains this something differently, "Though we are not free from a mixture of human infirmities, yet I do not exercise my apostolical power in a weak manner, as either fearing or flattering men; but use such spiritual weapons, as Christian fortitude, zeal, freedom in speaking the truth of God, and courage in administering the censures of the church, which through Divine concurrence are very effectual."

SECT. XVI.

Chap. X. 4.

ing, as we do, to despise the world, and seek for something so much above it, if we were not sincere in our profession, and authorised by him to maintain it. Yes, my brethren, God hath armed us for our warfare, by the miraculous powers of his Holy Spirit; and they are *mighty through God to the demolishing fortifications;* prejudices, and difficulties, that like so many impregnable castles, lay in our way, and yet are battered down, and laid in ruins, by these our

through God, to the pulling down of strong holds;)

5 spiritual weapons. And thus we go on in our conquest; for we are continually *casting down* the fallacious and sophistical *reasonings* by which vain men are endeavouring to expose our doctrine to contempt, *and every high thing which exalteth itself against the knowledge of God*, all the proud imaginations which men have entertained of themselves with regard to their natural or moral excellencies, in consequence of which they neglect the gospel, and are indeed ready to live without God in the world. *And* thus we are enabled *to bring every thought*, every proud haughty notion, which men have entertained, *into* an humble and willing *captivity* [c] *to the obedience of Christ*, the great Captain of our salva-

5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

6 tion. *And* as God is pleased thus to cause us to triumph in Christ, with regard to the opposition made by the professed enemies of the gospel, so let men regard us, as persons *having it in readiness*, by miraculous powers and penalties inflicted by them, *to avenge all disobedience*, to chastise and punish the obstinacy of those who under a Christian profession pretend to oppose us; *now your obedience is fulfilled*, and the sounder part of your church recovered to its due order and subjection.

6 And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

7 This is indeed the case, and I beseech you to consider it as it is. *Do you look at the outward appearance of things?* Do you judge of a man by his person, or address, or by any one particular of his life? Surely you ought not to do it. *If any man be confident in himself, that he is Christ's, let him again bethink himself of this*, which he will see evident reason to acknowledge, if

7 Do ye look at things after the outward appearance? If any man trust to himself, that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that as he *is*

c *Every thought into captivity.*] The soul, seeing its fortifications demolished, submits to the *conqueror;* and then *every thought*, every reasoning, takes law from him. Nothing is admitted that contradicts the *gospel;* Christ being acknowledged as *absolute* master. The former clause shews how ready men are to fortify themselves against it, and to raise, as it were, one barrier behind another, to obstruct *his* entrance into the soul. Compare Rom. xv. 18, 19.

d Mira-

is Christ's, even so *are* we Christ's.

if he candidly and seriously examine, *that as he* [*is*] *Christ's, so we also* [*are*] *Christ's;* nor can any one produce more convincing proofs of Christ's calling him to the ministry, and approving his discharge of it, than myself. *For* 8 *if I should boast something yet more,* abundantly more than I have ever yet done, *concerning our* apostolical *authority, which* I am sensible *the Lord hath given us for* the *edification* of the church, *and not for your destruction,* or the injury of any particular person, *I should not* have any reason to *be ashamed,* having already used it in a manner agreeable to its design.

SECT. XVI.

2 Cor. X. 7.

8 For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, (which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction,) I should not be ashamed :

9 That I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters.

And this I say, *that I may not seem as if I* 9 *would* by any means *terrify you with* my *epistles,* threatening more than I can perform; on the contrary, I might pretend to much more than I have done, and to execute, if need should require it, much greater severities in a way of miraculous punishment[d]. And the hint is ne- 10 cessary; *for* I know there are some among you that would represent matters quite in a different light. [*His*] *epistles, say they,* [*are*] *indeed weighty and strong, but* [*his*] *bodily presence* [*is*] *weak, and* [*his*] *speech despicable*[e]; for which indeed they have some excuse, as to my person, and the disadvantage attending my utterance. But *let such an one,* whoever he be, *reckon upon* 11 *this* as a certain fact, *that such as we are in word by* our *letters, when absent, such* [*shall we be*] *also when present, in action;* our deeds will fully correspond to our words, and we shall do something to vindicate these pretences, if their speedy reformation do not prevent.

10 For *his* letters (say they) *are* weighty and powerful, but *his* bodily presence *is* weak, and *his* speech contemptible.

11 Let such an one think this, that such as we are in word by letters when we are absent, such *will we be* also indeed when we are present.

For we presume not to number, or to compare 12 *ourselves with some who recommend themselves* in very high terms; *but they* thus *measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves*[f], while they proudly overlook the

12 For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that

d Miraculous punishment.] It is to be remembered it was before this time that the *apostle,* had smitten Elymas with blindness; and it is highly probable from this *text,* and others of the like nature, that some other *miracles* of this awful kind had been wrought by him, though they are not recorded in scripture.

e *Speech despicable.*] Chrysostom, Nicephorus, and Lucian, or rather the author of the Philopatris, relate of St. Paul, that his stature was low, his body crooked, and his head bald; which seem to be the infirmities here referred to. Some think he had also an *impediment* in his speech; but I do not recollect any ancient testimony to *that;* though it is not improbable. Compare chap. xii. 7, and the *note* there.

f *Measuring themselves by themselves:* εν εαυτοις εαυτους μετρουντες.] Dr. Whitby would render it, *measuring themselves by one another;* as if they compared themselves with their *false apostles,* and grew proud on

SECT. XVI.

2 Cor. X. 12.

the greatly superior characters and furniture of others, *are not wise*, nor do they indeed take the most effectual measures to raise their own character; but on the contrary, in consequence of this, fall into many absurdities of behaviour from which greater impartiality and modesty, and a better knowledge of men and things,
13 would secure them. *But we* are always careful, that we *glory not* of a distinguished zeal for the gospel carrying us *beyond* [*our*] *bounds*, *but* only *according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us* under the character of Apostle of the Gentiles, *a measure to come even unto you;* and accordingly we have regularly and gradually advanced towards you, taking
14 intermediate places in our way. *For we do not extend ourselves excessively, as not* regularly *coming to you;* like some who run abruptly from one church to another, leaving their work unfinished behind them, when they think they have discovered a place where they can meet with a more pleasant and agreeable reception. *For*, as I observed before, *we are*, by a regular progress, *come even unto you in the gospel of Christ*, having faithfully preached in the other places
15 that lay in our way: *Not* like those, whom I have had so much reason to complain of, *boasting unmeasurably*, or *in* things beyond my proper measure, not intruding into churches planted by *the labours of others*, where we have no natural and proper call; *but having* an agreeable *hope*, [*that*] *when your faith is increased*, as we must trust it will abundantly be, even by the experience of what has lately happened, *we shall according to our rule*, and the constant maxim we lay down to ourselves, *be magnified by you so as to abound* yet more, that is, shall by your countenance and assistance, be enabled to keep on our courses beyond your country into Arcadia,

that commend themselves: but they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves amongst themselves, are not wise.

13 But we will not boast of things without *our* measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you.

14 For we stretch not ourselves beyond *our measure*, as though we reached not unto you; for we are come as far as to you also, in *preaching* the gospel of Christ;

15 Not boasting of things without *our* measure, *that is*, of other mens labours: but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly.

on the degree in which they resembled them in acuteness and eloquence, or other things on which those deceitful teachers valued themselves. But it is more natural to think, that the meaning is, "they looked continually on *themselves*, surveying their own great imaginary furniture, but not considering the vastly superior abilities of many others: and so formed a disproportionate opinion of themselves." And this is every-where one of the *greatest* sources of pride. Bos has taken great pains to prove, that to *measure oneself by oneself*, is a phrase which expresses *modesty*, and making a right estimate of ourselves and others; and taking συνιασιν not for a *verb*, but for the *dative* of a *participle*, would render it, *we measure ourselves by ourselves, and compare ourselves with ourselves, not with the wise*, that is, *ironically*, not with such wise men as these. But though this sense be ingeniously defended by that great *critic*, the other seems most natural.

SECT. XVI.

Arcadia, and Lacedæmon, or whithersoever else Providence may lead us. For this is greatly in our hearts, if God shall smile upon our purposes, *to preach the gospel in the regions beyond you*[g], [*and*] *not to boast in another man's* province[h], or *rule in things made ready to our hand;* as some who are very solicitous about their own ease affect to do, and then pride themselves in sowing the ground which others have cleared. *But* after all, *he that boasteth*, whether it be of planting or watering churches, *let him boast* not in himself, but *in* the power and assistance of *the Lord* alone, let every minister remember it is to Christ that he owes all his ability for his work, and all his success in it. *For not he that commendeth himself* with the greatest confidence, and in the most florid manner, *is* truly and justly *approved; but* he *whom the Lord commendeth* by the gifts of his Spirit, and by a blessing on his ministry. Let those therefore, who are so ready to applaud themselves and each other, think of this, and learn to be more solicitous than they are, about approving their fidelity to their great Master, whether they be more or less regarded by their fellow servants.

16 To preach the gospel in the *regions* beyond you, *and* not to boast in another man's line, of things made ready to our hand.

2 Cor. X. 16.

17 But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

17

18 For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.

18

IMPROVEMENT.

MAY the *meekness and gentleness of Christ* ever be remembered by all his servants, and especially by his ministers, to whom, both under their public and private characters it will be of so great importance to imitate it. Their calling is indeed high and holy; let their behaviour in it be so much the more humble. And let it be their great care, that while they *walk in the flesh*, they do not *war after it*. Still, though disarmed of that miraculous power with which the *apostles* were endowed, are the *weapons of their warfare mighty*. They have the scripture-magazine ever at

Ver. 1

3

4

g *In the regions beyond you.*] It would certainly have been a great pleasure to the *apostle* to have gone on to Arcadia, and Lacedæmon, and to have proselyted those to the *gospel* who had been so long celebrated, in the latter of these places, for their *valour* and *magnanimity;* and in the former, for their *wit* and *poetry* in those agreeable and rural retreats. But we do not read any thing in the New Testament, of planting *Christian churches* in these parts of the Peloponnesus.

h *Another man's* province, &c.] The *apostle* did indeed go to places *already* converted, to confirm and establish his brethren in the faith; but this was chiefly where he had himself planted churches, though he might take some others in his way; which it would have been affectation and disrespect, rather than modesty to have avoided. But he did not *boast* in churches thus visited, as if he were the founder of them; as his opposers probably did, pouring contempt on St. Paul's labours; as if they were hardly to be called *Christian churches*, which he had left, as they pretended, in so unformed and unfinished a state.

SECT. XVI.

at hand, from whence they may be furnished with them; and may humbly hope, that the Spirit of God will render them effectual to the *pulling down strong holds*, and abasing every proud *imagination which exalteth itself against the obedience of God.* May every thought *of their own hearts* be in the first place thus subdued, and *brought into* a sweet and willing *captivity!* So shall these their captives, thus conquered, prove as so many faithful soldiers to fight for *him*, against whom they once were foolishly rebelling. And may they succeed in this holy war, till the empire of our Divine Master become universal, and the happiness of mankind universal with it!

Ver. 5

To promote this, let us pray, that *ministers* may always remember, that whatever *authority* they have given them, is for *edification*, and not for *destruction;* and may learn from that moderation with which the *apostle* used his miraculous powers, in how *gentle* and *candid* a manner they should behave themselves in their far inferior stations; never making their pre-eminence in the church the instrument of their own resentment, or of any other sinful or selfish passion; but ever solicitous to subserve the interest of our great Lord in all, and desirous to keep up their own character and influence, chiefly for his sake.

7—11

May they in no instance *boast beyond their proper measure;* and while they are ready, like *St. Paul*, to meet all the most labourious scenes of service, let them *glory not in themselves, but in the Lord.* This is a lesson we are *all* to learn. And whatever our stations in life are, let us resolutely and constantly guard against that *self-flattery* by which we may be ready to *commend ourselves*, in instances in which we may be least *approved* by him, whose favour alone is worthy of our ambition, and by whose judgment, in the day of final account, we must *stand* or *fall.*

12--16

17, 18

SECT. XVII.

The Apostle farther vindicates himself, from the perverse insinuations of them that opposed him at Corinth; particularly on the head of his having declined to receive a contribution from this church, for his maintenance. 2 Cor. XI. 1—15.

2 CORINTHIANS XI. 1.

SECT. XVII.

I WOULD advise every man, as I have hinted, to be sparing in his own commendation, and to study above all to approve himself to Christ; and yet in present circumstances, *I wish you would bear with a little of* [*my*] *folly*, that you would permit a little of that boasting which I know

2 Cor. XI. 1.

2 Cor. XI. 1.

WOULD to God you could bear with me a little in *my* folly, and

and indeed bear with me.

know generally to be foolish; *and indeed* I must intreat you to *bear with me* in what may look this way, considering the manner in which I am urged to it, and brought under an unwilling necessity. SECT. xvii. 2 Cor. XI. 1.

2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ.

2 *For I am jealous over you with* what I trust I may call *a godly jealousy*, and feel the warmest and most zealous desires, *that I may present* [*you as*] *a chaste virgin to Christ*[a]; *for I have*, by successfully preaching the gospel to you, and bringing you into the engagements of the Christian covenant, in effect *espoused you to one husband*[b], even to him; under the character of his servant and ambassador, I have led you into a holy contract with him, which hath been mutually sealed. I am therefore exceedingly concerned, that you may maintain a pure and loyal heart to him who has condescended to take you into so dear and intimate a relation.

3 But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

3 And I am the more solicitous about this, as I know what insinuating enemies are endeavouring to corrupt you: *for I fear lest by any means, as* in the first seduction and ruin of mankind, *the serpent deceived Eve*[c], our common mother, *by his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from* that *simplicity* which should always be in us *towards Christ*[d], and which the adulterous mixtures which some are endeavouring to introduce among you, would greatly injure.

For

a *That I may present you*, &c.] This is much illustrated by recollecting, that there was an *officer* among the *Greeks*, whose business it was to educate and form young women, especially those of rank and figure, designed for *marriage*, and then to *present* them to those who were to be their *husbands*, and if this *officer* permitted them, through negligence, to be corrupted, between the espousals and consummation of the marriage, great blame would naturally fall upon him.

b *For I have espoused you.*] This clause, ηρμοσαμην γαρ υμας ενι ανδρι, may be considered as a *parenthesis*; and therefore in the *paraphrase*, I have transposed it, that the construction may appear; ζηλω υμας παρας·ησαι, *I am jealous, &c.—that I may present you, &c.*

c *Lest as the serpent deceived Eve*, &c.] From the instance to which this is applied, viz. that of the false *apostles*, whose subtilty did not consist so much in crafty arguments, as in false *appearances*, by which they put on the outward forms of the *apostles* of Christ; Mr. *Rymer* infers (especially comparing *verse* 14,) that the subtilty of *Satan*, when he deceived Eve, consisted in putting on the appearance of an *angel of light*, or pretending to be one of the Seraphims that attended on the Schechinah. (*Rymer on Rev.* p. 79.) But I think that if it had been ever so expressly said by Moses, that the *deception* lay, as it very probably might, in pretending to have received the faculty of reason and speech, though a brute, by eating the fruit he proposed to her, it might be said in the general, that the false apostles deceived their followers as *Satan* deceived Eve, that is, by false pretences and insinuations.

d *Simplicity towards Christ*: απλοτης εις τον Χρις·ον.] This implies an entire undivided *devotedness* to Christ, as the great Husband Christians should desire to please, and from whom they are to receive law; and is with peculiar propriety opposed to that mixture of Judaism which some were endeavouring to bring in among the Corinthians.

e *Unskilful*

SECT. XVII.

2 Cor. XI. 4.

For if he that cometh among you with such extraordinary pretences, *preach another Jesus*, as a Saviour, *whom we have not preached;* if he can point out another Christ who shall equally deserve your attention and regard; *or* [*if*] *ye receive* by his preaching *another spirit, which ye have not* yet *received*, which can bestow upon you gifts superior to those which we have imparted; *or another gospel, which ye have not accepted*, the tidings of which shall be equally happy, evident, and important, *ye might well bear with* [*him,*] and there would be some excuse for your conduct; but how far this is from being, or so much as seeming to be the case, I need not say at large. Nor will you, I am sure, maintain any such thing; *for I reckon* upon most certain knowledge, that I was so far from being inferior in my discourses, or miracles, to these your favourite teachers, *that I did not in any respect fall short of the greatest of the apostles;* but gave you as evident and convincing proofs of a Divine mission as any church has ever received from any one of them. *For if* [*I am*] *unskilful in speech*, using plain and unpolished language like that of a man of the most ordinary education[e]; *nevertheless* [*I am*] *not so in knowledge* of the gospel of Christ, and the Divine dispensations which were introductory to it. *But in every respect we have been manifest to you in all things*, every one of you has had a proof of this, as you received the gospel from me, and therefore ought not to question my abilities, nor to prefer another in opposition to me.

4 For if he that cometh, preacheth another Jesus whom we have not preached, or *if* ye receive another spirit which ye have not received, or another gospel which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with *him*.

5 For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles.

6 But though I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all things.

7 Nothing can be more ungenerous and unreasonable, than to insinuate, that I have renounced my claim to being an apostle, by declining that maintenance which my brethren generally think it reasonable to take from the people among whom

7 Have I committed an

e *Unskilful in speech.*] ἰδιώτης properly signifies a *private man*, one that can speak no better than the generality of his neighbours, being unformed by the rules of eloquence. And this is consistent with that great *natural pathos* which we find in the *apostle's* writings; so that there is no need of recurring, as Dr. Whitby here does, to the supposed *impediment* in his speech, which allowing it ever so certain a fact, could not properly be expressed by *this* phrase. The good Archbishop of Cambray hath a very pertinent observation on this expression, in his excellent *Dialogues of Eloquence*, (p. 136,) viz. that this might well be the case, though St. Paul shared so largely in the *gift of tongues;* as when he was at Tarsus, he probably learnt a corrupt kind of *Greek*, spoken by the inhabitants of this place; for we have reason to believe, that as for *any* of the languages which the *apostles* had learnt in a *natural* way, the Spirit left them to speak as before.

f *Chargeable*

an offence in abasing myself, that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely?

whom they labour, and which while employed for them they may indeed reasonably expect. *Have I* then *committed an offence, in humbling myself* to the daily cares and toils of a tent-maker, *that you may* more effectually *be exalted* to the dignity of those who know and believe in Christ? Is this, after all, the crime, *that I have preached the gospel of God to you at free cost?* SECT. XVII. 2 Cor. XI. 7.

8 I robbed other churches, taking wages *of them*, to do you service.

I may almost, in this sense, be said to *have robbed other churches;* so freely have I received from them, at least *taking wages;* as it were [*of them*] *for waiting upon you;* for indeed I received a kind of stipend from them, while I abode at Corinth, (Phil. iv. 15.) 8

9 And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me, the brethren which came from Macedonia, supplied; and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and *so* will I keep *myself.*

And when I was in want, while present with you, *I was chargeable to no* one *man,* [f] of your society, when incapable of maintaining myself as before: *for what was deficient to me,* in this respect, *the* Christian *brethren who came from Macedonia, supplied;* (Phil. iv. 10.) *and in all things I have kept, and* so long as God shall enable me, *I will keep myself from being burthensome to you.* 9

10 As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia.

And this in some measure I value myself upon; so that *as the truth of Christ is in me, this boast shall not be violated,* nor this rule broke in upon *with respect to me,* at Corinth, or *in* all *the regions of Achaia.* 10

11 Wherefore? because I love you not? God knoweth.

And *why* is it that I insist upon this? Is it *because I love you not,* and therefore am unwilling to be under any obligation to you? *God knows* the contrary, that you have a large share in my tenderest affections and cares; yea, that it was my desire of serving you more effectually, that subjected me to these mortifications and self-denials; for such they undoubtedly were. 11

12 But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we.

But what I do in this respect, *I will* continue to *do, that I may cut off occasion from them who* greatly *desire* an *occasion* to reflect upon me, *that in* [*the thing of*] *which they* are so ready to *boast, they may be found even as we* [g]. I would teach them by my example, instead of boasting, that they have such an influence over you, as procures 12

[f] *Chargeable to no man*; ου κατεναρκησα ουδενος.] Beza would render it. *I was not idle at any man's expence.* The word ναρκη implies a *benumbed inactive state,* a kind of *torpor,* to which no man seems to be less obnoxious that St. Paul.

[g] *They might be found,* &c.] The Jews had a maxim among them 'that it was better for their wise men to skin dead beasts for a living, than to ask a maintenance from the generosity of those whom they taught.' But it plainly appears, that whatever the *false apostles* might boast upon this head, there was no foundation for it. Compare *verse* 20, and 1 Cor. ix. 12.

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cures them a plentiful, and perhaps splendid maintenance, that they rather emulate my disinterested conduct, and subsist on their own labours. But I know they have no inward principle to bear them through such hardships:

2 Cor. XI. 12.

13 *For such* whatever they pretend, [*are*] *false apostles*, destitute of that Divine mission which animates our spirits to do, or to bear, whatever we meet in the course of our duty; and indeed they are *deceitful workers*, whatever pains they may seem to take in their employment; *transforming themselves* artfully *into* the appearance of *apostles of Christ*, by counterfeit forms, which they may put on for a while, but which they can with no consistency long support.

13 For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.

14 *And* [*it is*] *no wonder* they assume them for a time; *for Satan himself*, in subordination to whom they act, can put on such deceitful appearances, and wear upon occasion such a mask of sanctity and religion in his attempts, that he *is*, as it were, *transformed into an angel of light*, and one would imagine his suggestions to be of a celestial and Divine original.

14 And no marvel: for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

15 *Therefore* [*it is*] *no great thing, if his ministers also*, under his influence, *be transformed as ministers of righteousness; whose end* nevertheless *shall be*, not according to their specious pretences, but *according to their works*; for they will find that God, upon whose judgment their final state depends, is not to be imposed upon by any of their artifices.

15 Therefore *it is* no great thing, if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 2 How adorable is the condescension of the blessed *Jesus*, who amidst all the exalted glories of his heavenly kingdom, is so graciously uniting souls to himself; *espousing* them in bonds of everlasting love, that they may be for ever near him, and receive the most endearing communications of his favour. Much should we all be concerned, that we may have the honour and blessings of such an alliance; that being by profession solemnly espoused to him, we may in the day of the *marriage of the Lamb*, *be presented chaste* and spotless. How vigilant should they be who are intrusted by him to treat with souls about these espousals! How solicitous, that they may succeed, and may so present them to Christ!

3 Still is that crafty *serpent*, whose malignant breath so soon tainted our common mother, and all our happiness, *by his subtilty*, labouring

labouring to corrupt our minds *from the simplicity* of true Christianity. Let us be incessantly watchful against the artful deceiver; remembering that his works and designs of darkness may sometimes be veiled as under the robes of *an angel of light*, and *his ministers transformed as ministers of righteousness. Be therefore sober and vigilant*, since your adversary the devil adds the wiliness of the old *serpent*, to the rage and cruelty of the roaring lion, and by both subserves his purposes of betraying, or *devouring* the souls of men. SECT. XVII. Ver. 14, 15

Let us therefore *with a godly jealously be jealous* over each other and especially over ourselves; and after the example of the *apostle*, be peculiarly so, when we are compelled to say any thing to our own advantage. Let us endeavour to arm ourselves against every surrounding danger, by a growing regard to the writings of this excellent man, who, though *rude in speech*, was was so far from being in any degree *deficient in Christian knowledge*, that he *was not behind the very chief of the apostles.* There are those that preach another gospel; but can they point out another Jesus, another all-sufficient Saviour? can they direct us to another Spirit? Let us hold fast the doctrine we learn from his faithful pen; let us follow the exhortations we receive from his experienced heart; and be ever ready to imitate him in that resolute *self-denial* which he exercised, and that glorious superiority to every other interest which he always shewed, where the interests of Christ and of souls were concerned. *So shall we cut off occasion from them that seek occasion against us, and secure* a far greater happiness, in the conscious reflection of our own minds, as well as the expectation of a future reward, than the greatest abundance of this world could have given us, or any present advantage to which we could have sacrificed the views of conscience and honour. 2 5 6 4 9 12

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Farther to assert his right as an apostle, St. Paul commemorates his labours and sufferings in the cause of Christ; yet in such a manner, as plainly to shew how disagreeable it was to him, so much as to seem to applaud himself, on the most necessary occasion. 2 Cor. XI. 16, *to the end.*

2 Cor. XI. 16.

I SAY again, Let no man think me a fool: if otherwise, yet as a fool receive me, that

2 CORINTHIANS XI. 16.

I HAVE said some things, which may seem more to the advantage of my character, than a man would wish any thing, which comes from his own lips, or pen, should appear. But *again I* must *say*, *Let no man think me* to be so *foolish* in this boasting, as to take any pleasure SECT. XVIII. 2 Cor. XI. 16.

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in commending myself. Let the provocation I have received be considered; let the necessity of the circumstance, and the importance of my character, be duly weighed; and you will surely excuse it. *But if* it must be *otherwise* censured, I will run the risk, and beseech you, if you think me foolish in it, *as foolish however*, to *receive* and bear with *me*, as well as others, *that I may* in my turn at least, *boast some small matter.*

that I may boast myself a little.

2 Cor. XI. 16.

17 *What I speak* on this head, *I speak not after the Lord*, not by any immediate direction or inspiration from Christ; nor is it so evidently in his Spirit as I could wish, or so apparently conformable to that example of modesty and humility which he hath set us; *but* I speak it, *as it were, foolishly in this confidence of boasting*[a]; on which account I return to this subject again with some

17 That which I speak, I speak *it* not after the Lord, but as it were foolishly in this confidence of boasting.

18 sensible regret. Yet lest my silence should be attended with still worse consequences, I think myself obliged, though with strong reluctance, to say, *seeing many boast according to the flesh*, in circumcision and Jewish extraction, *I also will boast* as well as they; and truly were I disposed to do it on these topics, you well know that no man could say more than I.

18 Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also.

19 *And* by the way, *you may well bear with foolish people, since you* [*yourselves*] *are* so wondrous *wise*, and in that abundant wisdom can cherish that arrogant temper in others, and second it

19 For ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye *yourselves* are wise,

20 with your high applause. Nay, indeed you go farther than that, and not only endure to hear your admired teachers make very indecent encomiums upon themselves, but tamely submit to them, while they invade your property, and tyrannize over you in a most arbitrary and scandalous manner. *For*, by what I can learn of the temper of some among you in that respect, and of your fond infatuation in their favour, it seems that *you bear it* patiently, *if a man enslave you*, and even trample upon your liberty, *if he devour* [*you*] by his exorbitant demands, *if he* take and *seize* [*on your possessions*] *if he exalt himself* as if he were your supreme and absolute sovereign,

20 For ye suffer if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour *you*, if a man take *of you*, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face.

a *Foolishly in this confidence of boasting.*] It seems indeed not very just and natural to interpret this, as spoken by immediate suggestion; yet, it being in present circumstances very proper the *apostle* should speak thus, the *Holy Spirit* might by a general, though unperceived, influence, lead him into this tract of thought and expression; and though such apologies might seem beneath the dignity of an *apostle's* character, yet that very *condescension* is an excellent and most useful *example* of humility to all Christians, and especially to *ministers*.

b *Smite*

sovereign, *if* his mad passion were to transport him even to blows, and *he* were to *smite you on the face*[b], your fondness for him would prevent your calling him to a just account, and you would find some way of excusing, or accommodating the affair, rather than come to a breach with him. SECT. XVIII. 2 Cor. XI. 20.

21 I speak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak: howbeit, wherein soever any is bold, (I speak foolishly) I am bold also.

Do I speak this by way of dishonour, from an envious desire to derogate from my superiors, and so bring them down to my own level; *as if we ourselves were weak* in comparison with them, and therefore have not the courage to attempt such freedoms as they take? There can *surely* be no reason to suspect that; for be they ever so puffed up with their external privileges, I would have them to know, that *in whatever any one else may be confident* in these respects, though *I speak it* indeed *in folly, I also am confident*, and on their own terms could match, or even exceed them. 21

22 Are they Hebrews? so *am* I: are they Israelites? so *am* I: are they the seed of Abraham? so *am* I.

Are they, for instance, *Hebrews* by language, capable of consulting the scriptures in the original, with all the advantage which a familiar acquaintance with that tongue from their childhood can give them? *so* [*am*] *I: Are they Israelites* by birth, not descended from Esau, or any other branch of the family, but that on which the blessing was entailed? *so* [*am*] *I* likewise. *Are they of the seed of Abraham*, both by the fathers and mothers side, not proselytes, or of mingled descent? *so* [*am*] *I;* and can trace up as fair and clear a genealogy, through the tribe of Benjamin, to the father of the faithful. 22

23 Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I *am* more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.

Or if they would boast in a manner more peculiarly referring to the gospel; *are they ministers of Christ? I* may seem to *speak foolishly* in this boasting manner, which is so unnatural to me; I cannot forbear repeated apologies for it; but I will venture to say here, that *I* [*am*] *more* so than they: so far more than an ordinary minister, that I am a chosen apostle, dignified and distinguished from many of my brethren by more eminent services: *more abundant in labours* now for a long series of years: *exceeding* them *in* the frequent *stripes* I have received 23

b *Smite you on the face.*] As one can hardly imagine, that the *false apostles* would run all these lengths, (though Dr. Whitby well observes, that the high conceit which the Jews had of their superiority over the Gentiles, might lead them to great *insolence* of behaviour) I chose to *paraphrase* the words in such a *latitude* as might wave the severity of the most literal interpretation,

c *Thrice*

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ceived on account of my singular zeal; *more abundant in imprisonments*, cheerfully resigning my liberty for the sake of Christ and his gospel; and *often in deaths*, which are continually surrounding me in the most horrible forms; but which, by Divine grace, I have learnt to meet and to vanquish in all their terrors, animated by love to my Divine Leader.

2 Cor. XI. 23.

24 I certainly have endured more blows than any of them in his cause; for *of the Jews I have five times received*, in their synagogues and before their courts of judgment, *forty [stripes] save one*, according to the precautions which they use, that they may not transgress the precept of their law, which limits them to that number. (Deut. xxv. 3.) And *thrice was I beaten with rods* by the Roman lictors or beadles, at the command of their superior magistrates. I have reason to say, I have been in greater danger of death than any of them: for *once*, at Lystra, *I was stoned*, and left for dead in the place; nor had I been recovered but by miracle. (Acts xiv. 19.) *Thrice I have been shipwrecked* [c], and escaped with the utmost difficulty from the rage of the waves; at one of which times I was reduced to such extremity, that *I passed a day and a night in the deep* [d], floating on the remainder of the wreck, and just on the point of being washed away, and sunk, every moment. On the whole, I have been *in journies often*, where I have not only been exposed to fatigues, but to great hazard from wild beasts, as well as from unreasonable and wicked men. I have also been *in* frequent *dangers from* the depths and rapidity of several *rivers* [e], which I have been obliged to pass; I have also been *in danger from* the assaults of *robbers*, who have lain in wait for me with a design

24 Of the Jews five times received I forty *stripes*, save one.

25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep.

26 In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by *mine own* coun-

c *Thrice have I been shipwrecked.*] The wreck at Malta happened long after; and therefore must at least have been the *fourth*; and had the inhabitants known it to be so, they would have been confirmed in their *suspicions* of his being a very bad man; but this remarkably shews us that a series of what the world calls *misfortunes* from the hand of Providence, may befall the best and worthiest of mankind.

d *Passed a day and a night in the deep.*] Νυχθημερον, (rendered *a day* and *a night*) signifies a *natural day*, including the hours of light and darkness. Βυθῳ, the word here used, and rendered, *in the deep*, was indeed the name of a deep *dungeon*, at Cyzicum, in the Propontis; and Dr. Hammond conjectures, that St. Paul was cast into it, as he passed from Troas to that city; but I think the other interpretation more easy and natural.

e *In dangers from rivers.*] To render ποταμων, *waters*, as we do, is confounding *these* hazards with those he endured in the *sea*, in a very improper manner.

f *False*

countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren.

design to plunder and murder me. I have often been *in dangers from [my own] countrymen*, the Jews; who forgetting the mutual ties of relation by blood, birth, and religion, have attempted my life with unsatiable rage, cruelly hunting me from place to place, as if I had been some beast of prey; *in dangers from the heathen;* who have often been stirred up by the Jews, as well as offended by the testimony I have been obliged to bear against their idolatries. Every place through which I have passed has indeed been a scene of perils, and often of great extremities; so that I have been *in dangers in the city* of Jerusalem, and other cities: *in dangers in the wilderness*, while laboriously traversing many dreary and inhospitable desarts in pursuit of my apostolical work: *in dangers of the sea;* where I have encountered many a storm, besides those in which, as I observed before, I suffered shipwreck; and where I have sometimes been beset by pirates: And though it be shameful to say it, yet it is most certainly true, that I have frequently been *in* very formidable *dangers among false brethren*[f], who, amidst all the most specious pretensions of love and affection, have been secretly watching for opportunities to expose, and, if possible, to destroy me; or at least to ruin my usefulness, still dearer to me than my life.

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2 Cor. XI. 26.

27 In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

27 I have been for a long series of years engaged *in strenuous labour, and* fatiguing *toil*[g], almost incessant; so that the end of one has presently been the beginning of another: I have been, *in watchings, often* obliged to add the fatigues of the night to those of the day, either in extraordinary devotion, which hath kept mine eyes waking, while others have slept; or in preaching to those who have pressed in upon me to hear the gospel as privately as possible; or by corresponding with Christian churches who needed my advice, by which I have lost the rest of many nights in my long journies; or *in* other circumstances into which Providence hath called me. I have often known what *hunger and thirst* mean, have been *in fastings often*, not having

f *False brethren.*] Perhaps he mentions these *last* as apprehending peculiar danger from their efforts among the Corinthians.

g *In labour and toil.*] The latter of the words here used μοχθῳ, is more expressive than the former κοπῳ. It signifies not only strenuous labour, but such as proceeds to a degree of *fatigue.*

h *Cold*

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having had even the necessaries of life at hand. And at the same time, I have frequently been exposed to the severity of rigorous seasons, *in cold and* even *nakedness* too[h]; not having convenient clothing to cover me, or comfortable habitation to repose myself in. All this, *beside foreign affairs*, that daily combination, that does, as it were, make up an assembly, *the care of all the churches* abroad, whose concerns are *rushing in upon me every day*[i], with such impetuosity, that they sometimes are ready not only to confound, but to overbear me. Nor am I concerned only for whole communities, but for particular persons too, as soon as their circumstances are known to me; so that I may say, *Who is weak, and I am not weak* too? Like a tenderly-compassionate friend, I feel my own spirits ready to fail, when I see my brethren sink around me. *Who is offended*, so as to be led into sin by the rashness and uncharitableness of others, *and I am not*, as it were, *fired* with grief and indignation, to see such a dishonour brought upon religion, and with zeal, if possible, to redress the grievance[k]?

2 Cor. XI. 27.

28

29

If it is necessary to boast, and I am heartily sorry that it is, *I will* however, *boast* of those *things which relate to my infirmities*; as I know this tenderness of temper, that so often weeps and trembles, and glows with such strong emotions, on what some may think trivial occasions, will be esteemed by them; yet of these only, and of those sufferings which show the weakness of human nature, and my need of support from Christ; of these alone have I hitherto presumed to speak: nor do I feign, or aggravate any thing. Far

30

28 Besides those things that are without that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?

30 If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.

h *Cold and nakedness.*] What an idea does this give us of the *apostle's fidelity and zeal!* It is to die warm in a good and noble cause. How hard was it for a man of a genteel and liberal education, as St. Paul was, to bear such rigours, and to wander about like a vagabond, hungry and almost naked, yet coming into the presence of persons in high life, and speaking in large and various assemblies on matters of the utmost importance.

i *Rushing in upon me every day.*] The original phrase is very emphatical, η επισυσασις μοι η καθ' ημεραν. Επισυσασις properly signifies a *tumult* or crowd of people rising up against a man at once, and ready to bear him down. This, the *version* I have given hints at better than our own, which neither expresses *number* nor *violence*. But there is still an imperfection which I endeavoured as well as I could, to supply by the *paraphrase*. Mr. *Saurin* would render it, *what besieges me daily.* *Saurin's Serm.* vol. X. p. 163. Edit. 1749.

k *Who is offended, and I am not fired?*] So πυρουμαι properly signifies. It may perhaps, in this connection, allude to the sudden *hurry of spirits* into which a man is put by the dangerous fall of a person he tenderly loves, especially when occasioned by the carelessness and folly of another.

31 The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not.

Far from that, *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, even he, the Eternal Majesty of heaven and earth, *who is ever blessed, knoweth that I do not lie*, or in any degree transgress the strictest boundaries of truth. SECT. XVIII. 2 Cor. XI. 31.

32 In Damascus the governor under Aretas the King, kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me:

And I cannot forbear adding one circumstance more, to illustrate the early dangers to which I was exposed, as soon as I engaged in the Christian cause, and the remarkable interposition of Providence in my favour, which I would never forget. I mean, that when I was *in Damascus*[1], about three years after my conversion, *the governor*, or ethnarch, *under King Aretas, set a guard at* every gate of *the city of the Damascenes, being determined*, if possible, *to seize me;* in compliance with the solicitations of the Jews, who endeavoured by any means to make me odious to the government, and to crush my usefulness in the bud, if not immediately to destroy my life itself. 32

33 And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands.

And I was let down, through a window, in a basket, from a house which stood *by the wall* of the city, *and* happily *escaped from his hands;* and by the continued care of the same Providence remain unto this day, and see the many contrivances of my enemies for my destruction, turned into disappointment and shame. 33

IMPROVEMENT.

SURELY we have reason to be thankful, in some degree, for that providential permission to which it was owing that this blessed *apostle* was brought under the unwilling *necessity of boasting;* to which his modesty submits with such genuine and becoming regret: we had otherwise lost some very valuable fragments of sacred *history*, which it becomes us to gather up with respect. We are indeed elsewhere informed, concerning several of his *labours, stripes, and imprisonments;* but how frequent, and *above measure* they were, we had never known, if he had not been urged thus to plead them with the *Corinthians*, and so to represent them to us. What a life was *St. Paul's* amidst so many injuries and hardships! *Land* and *sea*, every *country*, every *city*, almost every society of men, seemed to be in a combination against him, to make his Ver. 16--18 23

1 *In Damascus*, &c.] This probably happened, not when he was *first* converted, but when he had preached about three years in Arabia. Compare Acts ix. 23,—26. with Gal. i. 16,—18.

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his life wretched; and amidst all the rigours and severities of *toils and watchings, hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness*, he felt, and particularly complained of the treatment he received from *false brethren*. Yet thus *surrounded*, and as we should from the detail be ready to say, thus *overwhelmed*, with so many and so various miseries, he was yet happy in the favour of *God*, in the presence of *Christ:* unspeakably happy in the cheerful views of approaching *glory*, and in all that abundant usefulness with which a gracious God was pleased to honour him. Whilst his benevolent heart was pained, it was also comforted; and with *the care of all the churches pressing upon him*, and with all that he felt from particular persons, still was his voice in tune for *praise;* and he hardly ever begins an *epistle*, without such a burst of it in some of his first lines, as looks like one of the songs of heaven. O glorious effect of real christianity, which every inferior *minister*, yea, and every private *Christian*, to this day feels, in proportion to the degree in which his character resembles that of this holy champion of our Divine faith!

Ver. 26 28

But O! how unlike *his* hath been the character of many who have borne themselves highest on their pretended claims to the most extraordinary powers, by a succession from him and his brethren! What tyrannical *insults!* What exorbitant *oppressions!* What base methods to *enslave* the conscience, the properties, and the persons of men, whom they should have respected and loved as their *brethren*, whom they should have cherished even as their *children!* So that one would imagine they had taken the picture which *St. Paul* here draws of the *false apostles*, as a model of their own conduct; while they have perhaps denied the title of *ministers of Christ* to those who have much more resembled the dispositions and circumstances of this his most faithful ambassador. O that this might *only* be the infamy of the *Popish* clergy, with whose cruel and usurping practices such censures may seem best to suit! Or rather, would to God it were no longer even theirs. May *the God* and *Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed for evermore*, pour out a better spirit upon all who profess themselves the servants of his Son! That they, whose business it is to call others to *Christ*, may themselves first come, and learn of him, *who is meek and lowly of heart; whose yoke is so easy, and his burden so light*, that it is astonishing, that any who have themselves felt it, should ever think *of binding on others, burdens heavy and hard to be borne.*

21 23 31

SECT.

SECT. XIX.

The Apostle goes on, with great plainness and freedom, yet at the same time with great modesty, to give an account of some extraordinary revelations which he had received from God, and of those experiences which taught him to glory even in his infirmities. 2 Cor. XII. 1—10.

2 Cor. XII. 1.

IT is not expedient for me doubtless, to glory: I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.

2 Corinthians XII. 1.

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2 Cor. XII. 1.

I HAVE spoken with some freedom in the preceding discourse of my labours and sufferings in the Christian cause; and whatever they have been, *I well know,* that *it is not expedient for me to boast;* nor would I by any means indulge myself in such a practice; *nevertheless*[a], with the precautions I have already advanced, and with those good purposes continually in view, that have led me so far out of my common manner of speaking, *I will* now *come to* say something of those *visions and revelations of the Lord* with which his unworthy servant has, by his astonishing grace and condescension, been favoured. I hardly indeed know how to mention a name so undeserving as my own, in this connection; but I will venture in the general to say, that *I* well *knew a* certain *man in Christ*[b]; one who esteems it his highest honour to belong to such a Master; who though he hath hitherto thought proper to conceal it, was remarkably indulged in this respect, *above fourteen years ago. Whether* he was then *in the body*, during that extraordinary ecstacy, *I know not; or* for a time taken *out of the body*, so that only the principle of animal

2 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God

a *Nevertheless.*] The *apostle's* speaking of his *visions* and *revelations*, which indeed did him the highest honour, could not be a proof that he was determined not to *boast.* It is evident, therefore, that γαρ cannot have its usual signification, and be rendered *for.* Our translators take it for a mere *expletive*, and therefore omit it. I have ventured to render it *nevertheless*, as it is certain it has often various significations, and must have this signification here, if it express any thing. The force of *but* in this connection would be the same with nevertheless.

b *A* certain *man in Christ.*] He must undoubtedly mean *himself*, or the whole article had been quite foreign to his purpose. It appears from hence, that the *Apostle* had concealed this extraordinary event fourteen *years;* and if this *epistle* was written about the *year* 58, as we suppose it was, this vision must have fallen out in the *year* 44, which was so long after his conversion, as to prove it quite different from the *trance* mentioned Acts ix. 9, with which some have confounded it. Dr. *Benson* thinks this glorious representation was made to him while he was praying in the temple, in that journey, Acts xi. 30. chap. xxii. 17, and intended to encourage him against the difficulties he was to encounter in preaching the *gospel* to the Gentiles. *Bens. Prop.* vol. II. p. 7. See vol. VIII. sect. 50, note a.

c *Whether*

SECT. XIX.

2 Cor. XII. 2.

animal life remained in it, *I know not*[c]. *God only knows* how that was: nor is it of any importance too curiously to search into such a circumstance. He had at least no consciousness of any thing that passed about him at that time, and all his sensations were as entirely ceased, as if his union with the body had been broken. *Such an one*, I say, I did most intimately know, *who was snatched up even into the third heaven*, the seat of the Divine glory, and the place where Christ dwelleth at the Father's right hand, having all the celestial principalities and powers in humble subjection to him. *Yea, I* say, I even *knew such a man, whether in the body, or out of the body*, I now say not, because *I know not: God knoweth;* and let him have the glory of supporting his life in so extraordinary a circumstance, which ever might be the case. And I know, *that* having been thus entertained with these visions of the third heavens, on which good men are to enter after the resurrection, lest he should be impatient under the delay of his part of the glory there, *he was* also *caught up into paradise*[d], that garden of God which is the seat of happy spirits in the intermediate state, and during their separation from the body: where he had the pleasure of an interview with many of the pious dead, *and heard* among them *unutterable words*, expressive of their sublime ideas, which he was there taught to understand. But the language was *such as it is not* lawful or *possible*[e] *for man to utter;* we have no terms of speech fit to express such conceptions, nor would it be consistent with the schemes of Providence,

God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.

3 And I knew such a man (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth:)

4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

c *Whether in the body*, &c.] As St. Paul must know his body was not actually dead, during this *trance*, but that the animal motion of his *heart and lungs* continued, it would lead one to imagine, that he really apprehended the principle of *animal* life to be something *distinct* from the *rational* soul, which he calls *himself*. It appears at least, that he lost all consciousness of any thing about him at that time; and what the presence of an *immaterial* soul in a body can be, distinct from the capacity of perceiving by it, and acting upon it, I am yet to learn.

d Also *caught up into paradise.*] I have followed Bishop *Bull's* interpretation of these words, in the distinction he makes between the *third heavens* and *paradise*. See his *Works*, vol. I. serm. 3, p. 89. To which Dr. Whitby agrees, who also supposes this not merely a *vision*, as I think it was, but a *reality;* which if St. Paul had thought it, he must surely have concluded that he was not then *in the body*.

e Lawful or *possible.*] I think, with Witsius, that ἐξὸν may comprehend both.—Different *divines* have conjectured very differently concerning these things; of which I suppose they know nothing. But Mr. Fleming's conjecture, that he was instructed in the doctrine of the *first resurrection;* and Mr. *Whiston's*, that he was instructed in the grand secrets contained in the *apostolical constitutions* revealed to the *eleven* in the chamber on Sion, and not to be publicly disclosed till many ages after; may serve as specimens of the rest.—*Whist. Prim. Christianity*, vol. III. p. 32.

Providence, which require that we should be conducted by faith, rather than by sight, to suffer such circumstances as these to be revealed to the inhabitants of mortal flesh. *In such an one*, therefore, whoever, he be *I will* venture to *boast*, so far as to say, that he received a peculiar honour from our great Lord, and for the time, was made, as it were, another man by it. *But in myself, I will not boast, unless it be in my infirmities*, in those things which carry the marks of weakness, which yet in a certain connection will appear honourable too. *For if I should* 6 *resolve to boast* a little on the occasion I have mentioned, *I shall not* upon the whole *be foolish;* though it be generally so, considering the particular circumstances in which I am; *for I speak* nothing but *the* strictest *truth*, how strange soever it may seem. *But I forbear* to insist largely upon it, *lest any one should esteem me above what he sees to be in me, or*, having a fair opportunity of learning my true character, *hears of me;* for instead of arrogating to myself any undeserved regards, I would rather decline them, and should be secretly grieved and ashamed if they were paid to me.

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2 Cor. XII. 5.

5 Of such an one will I glory; yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.

6 For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but *now* I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me *to* be, or *that* he heareth of me.

I have indeed had my peculiar privileges; but 7 alas, I have my infirmities, and my temptations too. *And lest I should be too much elevated with the abundance of* those extraordinary *revelations* of which I have been speaking, *there was given me*, that is, it pleased God to appoint to me an affliction, which was so painful, that it was like *a* pointed *thorn in the flesh*[f] continually piercing and wounding me; and this in such circumstances, that one would think it had been intended on purpose, *that the messenger* and apostle of *Satan*, the false teachers whom I have been

7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

f *A thorn in the flesh.*] How much this *thorn* in St. Paul's *flesh* has perplexed and disquieted *commentators*, they who have conversed much with them, know but too well. Many have understood it of *bodily pains;* and Mr. Baxter, being himself subject to a *nephritick* disorder, supposes it might be the *stone*, or *gravel*. The conjectures of some of the *ancients* are much grosser. I rather acquiesce in that interpretation by Dr. Whitby (which the author of *Miscel. Sacra* has adopted, and taken pains to illustrate, *Essay* iii. p. 22—24:) That the view he had of celestial glories, affected the system of his *nerves* in such a manner, as to occasion some *paralytick* symptoms, and particularly a *stammering* in his speech, and perhaps some ridiculous *distortion* in his countenance, referred to elsewhere in the phrase of the *infirmity in his flesh*. See Gal. iv. 13, 14. 1 Cor. ii. 3. Compare Dan. viii. 27. As this might threaten both his acceptance and usefulness, it is no wonder he was so importunate for its being removed; yet being the attendant and effect of so great a favour, he might with peculiar propriety speak of *glorying* in it.

g *Pitch*

SECT. XIX.

been describing, (chap. xi. 13—15) under that character, *might* from thence take occasion to
2 Cor. XII. 7. *buffet* and upbraid *me; that I*, being subject to such disorders, though naturally resulting from the manner in which my nerves were impressed by this ecstacy, *might not be excessively exalted;* but might bear away, like Jacob, when he had been so successfully wrestling with the angel, an infirmity in my animal frame, from which ungenerous and cruel enemies might profanely take an occasion to insult me. Gen. xxxii. 25.

8 This was indeed at first so very grievous and mortifying to me, and seemed to have so unhappy an aspect upon my acceptance and usefulness, as a preacher of the gospel, that *I* was very importunate in my petitions that it might be removed, and *besought the Lord* Jesus Christ *thrice on the occasion*, intreating him *that*, if it were his blessed will, *it might* totally *depart from me*, or at least be moderated in some considerable degree. *And* my prayer was not in vain; for though he did not entirely and fully indulge my request, *he said to me*, in great condescension, *My grace is sufficient for thee*, to support thee under these trials, though I permit them to continue, which I now choose; *for my strength is made perfect*, and illustrated so much the more, *in* the *weakness* of the instrument by which I work; and this general maxim will take place with respect to thee. *With the greatest pleasure, therefore will I boast in my weaknesses*, various as they are, *that the strength of Christ may*, as it were, *pitch its tent upon me*[g], and surround me on every side. *And therefore I feel a* secret *complacency*, rather than anxiety and terror, *in* these *infirmities*, *in* all the *injuries* I sustain, *in* all the *necessities* I endure, *in* all the *persecutions* with which I am assaulted, and *in* all the *straits* which *for Christ's sake* press me on every part; *for when I am weak, then am I strong*; never do I feel larger inward communications of strength from him, than when I am most conscious of my own weakness. Nor do I esteem any thing a greater honour to me, than that Christ should take occasion to glorify himself by those things whereby I am humbled and abased.

8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

IMPROVE-

g *Pitch its tent*, &c.] That seems the strong *emphasis* of the original word επισκηνωσῃ.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. xix.

WELL might the *apostle* say, that *when he was weak, then was he strong;* for it is difficult to tell, when he expresses a greater strength of *genius*, or of *grace*, than while thus discoursing of his own infirmities. How glorious were those *scars* in his body which were the marks of his sufferings for Christ; and those tremblings and distortions of his nerves which were the results of those bright *visions of the Lord* which brought down heaven to earth, and had for the time equalled a *mortal* man with the *spirits of just men made perfect;* yea, almost with the *angels of God!* Ver. 10 1 7

Transported with the sacred impulse, he could scarcely tell whether he were *in the body or out of it;* but he testified, that the things which he saw and heard were *unutterable.* Let us not repine, that he recollected and recorded nothing more particular concerning what passed before the eye of his mind, when that of the body was closed. These celestial raptures were intended to confirm *his* faith, and consequently likewise to confirm *ours;* but not to amuse our curiosity. If *the earth be full of the goodness of the Lord*, how much more the *third heavens*, where he holds his highest court! Nor shall the *intermediate state* of souls want its proper enjoyments and blessings. Assuredly therefore believing these things, let us wait God's time for a more particular knowledge of them; and when called of him to go forth and receive this inheritance, like genuine children of *Abraham*, *obey, though we know not* particularly *whither we go.* (Heb. xi. 8.) 3 4 2

We see the danger of *spiritual pride*, from which even St. Paul himself was not secure. One would have imagined, that such a view of the celestial world should in itself have been sufficient to have humbled him, during all the remainder of the longest life; and yet it is evident, that God saw there was some danger, lest *pride* should be cherished by that which seemed so proper to destroy it; therefore was there given him a *thorn in the flesh.* And by how many *thorns* are the most distinguished Christians often *pierced?* Let them bless God, if thereby they are *humbled* too, even though the *messengers* and instruments *of Satan* should from thence take occasion to *buffet* them. 7

In all our exigencies, extremities, and complaints, let us apply to the *throne of grace*, and that blessed *Redeemer*, who intercedes before it, for proper assistance and relief. Nor let us be discouraged, though the *first or second* address, should seem to be disregarded; the *third or fourth* may be successful. And what, if we do not succeed to our wish in the *immediate* answer? Let it content us, that we may be assured by *Christ* of the *sufficiency of his* 8

SECT. XIX.

his grace. In *our weakness* he can illustrate *his strength.* And in that view too may we *glory in our infirmities.* For surely the honour of our Divine Master, in our deepest humiliation, ought
Ver. 9 to give us much more joy, than to see ourselves ever so much admired and extolled. "But, O blessed *Jesus,* how much of *thy strength* must be *manifested in us,* to teach our vain and selfish hearts a lesson, which at the very first proposal appears so reasonable, if considered in speculation alone? *Lord increase our faith!* Increase our *humility!* So shalt thou have the *glory* in all thou givest, and in all thou deniest us, and in all the struggles and
10 trials to which thou mayest appoint us; and in which, *for thy sake,* we will *take pleasure.*"

SECT. XX.

The Apostle vindicates the frankness, sincerity, and tenderness, of his conduct, and his visible superiority to all secular considerations, in all his dealings with the church at Corinth. 2 Cor. XII. 11, *to the end.*

2 CORINTHIANS XII. 11.

2 Cor. XII. 11. I AM become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing.

SECT. XX.

IT may be indeed, my brethren, that *I am become foolish in boasting,* as I have done above;
2 Cor. XII. 11 but if it be so, you will consider where the blame lies. For, you, by the manner in which some of *you,* to whom I am now speaking, have behaved yourselves, may be said to *have compelled me* to do it, even against my will. In which you are peculiarly inexcusable; *for I ought* indeed *to have been commended by you,* rather than to have found any necessity of pleading with you, in the manner I have done; *for I have in no respect* whatsoever, *failed to equal the most excellent of the apostles, though I am* myself *nothing* in the account of some; nor indeed am I any thing in reality without the aids of Divine grace and assistance, nor would I assume to myself any glory from what that hath made me.
12 Yet *truly* God has been pleased to communicate of his bounties to me in such a degree, that *the signs of an apostle were produced among you* in a variety of most convincing miracles; miracles, by which I was not puffed up, but which were wrought *in all patience, in* the midst of this unreasonable opposition I met with, notwithstanding these *signs, and wonders, and powers,* which awakened the amazement of all that beheld.

12 Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.

Nor

Nor did I exert these miraculous powers in chastising the irregular, but chose rather, if it were possible, to conquer by love and by benefits. SECT. XX. 2 Cor. XII. 12

13 For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except *it be* that I myself was not burdensome to you; forgive me this wrong.

And you know that I conferred many benefits: *for in what* one *respect were ye inferior to the rest of the churches* planted by the other apostles, *unless* [*it were in this, that I myself was not burdensome to you,* by taking any acknowledgment for my labours? No, not so much as a subsistence among you at your expence. *Forgive me,* I beseech you, *this* great *injury:* for I think, I hardly need to ask you forgiveness on any other account. 13

14 Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you; for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.

Behold, now, this is *the third time I am ready to come to you,* having been disappointed twice before. (1 Cor. xvi. 5; 2 Cor. i. 13, 16.) *Nevertheless, I will not* now *be,* in the sense I have mentioned, *burdensome to you, for* God knows, *I seek not your possessions, but yourselves.* If I can but be instrumental in promoting your salvation, and at the same time secure your filial love and affection, I shall think myself happy, though I reap not the least personal advantage from your property, where it is most abundant. *For it is not fit, that the children should lay up treasure for the parents, but the parents for the children.* I therefore, being your spiritual father, will communicate to you such treasures as I have, and will not desire to share yours. *For I will with the greatest pleasure spend, and be spent for your souls;* I will gladly exhaust my strength, and put myself to any expence too, in order to promote this; *though* the consequence of all should be, that *the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved* by you. How unkind soever your returns may be, if you should treat me like those perverse creatures who take a pleasure in tormenting them that love them best, yet shall you still find me a sincere friend to your best interests. (Compare 2 Tim. ii. 10; 1 Thess. ii. 8.) 14 15

15 And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.

16 But be it so, I did not burden you: nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile.

But I know, some will be ready to object to all this; as what will not envy and falsehood suggest, where there is any interest in fixing an odium? *let it be so, I did not* indeed myself *burden you,* nor demand subsistence among you as my right; *but* perhaps it will be insinuated, that *being subtil I took you in by an artifice,* making others the instruments of my mercenary prin- 16

SECT. XX.

principles, while I appeared myself so disinterested. I answer, by appealing to plain fact,

2 Cor. XII. 17. *Did I make a prey of you, by any one whom I sent to you* with any message from me, or who came to me about any business while I was resident among you; name the man, if you can, on whom there is reason to fix any such suspicion. I defy the boldest of mine enemies to alledge, what must recoil on himself with so

17 Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I sent unto you?

18 much infamy. I know, that *I intreated Titus* to make you a visit, *and with* [*him*] *I sent a brother*, to keep him company on the journey. *Did Titus* then *make a gain of you? Did we not walk in the same spirit*, [*and*] *in the same steps?* Did not all his actions resemble mine, as formed upon the same principles of strict integrity, and generous friendship?

18 I desired Titus, and with *him* I sent a brother. Did Titus make a gain of you? walked we not in the same spirit? *walked we* not in the same steps?

19 *Again, do you think that we make any apology to you*, and endeavour to amuse you with mere words, mentioning Titus' coming to excuse my own absence? *In the sight of God we speak* as those who know he is witness to every action and word; yea, that he knows the secret springs of affection which actuate our hearts; and we speak as those that are *in Christ* by a solemn profession of his religion, and should abhor any thing which might bring a reflection upon it. *And all things* that we say, when we are endeavouring to reconcile your minds to us, are not for our own sake, but [*we speak*] *beloved, for your edification*; that by removing your prejudices against us, we may be capable of being more serviceable to you in your most important

19 Again, think you that we excuse ourselves unto you? we speak before God in Christ: but *we do* all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying.

20 interests. *For I* am really distressed on this account, and sadly *fear, lest* by any means *when I come* unto you with an heart full of Christian tenderness, and with all imaginable readiness to do my utmost to comfort and refresh your spirits, *I should not find you such as I could wish; and* that *I should be found by you such as ye would not wish* I should be. I fear I shall have some work before me of a very ungrateful kind, and which I would by all means desire, if possible, by this admonition to prevent. For I am very apprehensive, *lest* [*there should be*] *contentions*, arising from secret and very unbecoming *emulations*[a], and growing up to transports

20 For I fear, least when I come I shall not find you such as I I would, and *that* I shall be found unto you such as ye would not; lest *there be* debates

a *Contentions, emulations,* &c.] All these were the natural consequences of those *debates* which had arisen among them; and therefore he, in a very artful manner, gives this solemn warning with relation to them.

debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults:

SECT. XX.

ports of *wraths*, *strifes*, where there is a clashing either of opinions or secular interests; which will tend to produce open *reproaches* or secret *whisperings*, to the manifest prejudice of each other's character; the inward *swellings* of pride and ambition, or perhaps the open confusion of riots and *tumults*, by which your cause in general will be exposed to public contempt: [*And*] indeed on the whole, I am very apprehensive, *lest my God should humble* and mortify *me when I come among you again*; so that my spirit should be even dejected and broken, on account of the sad change which hath passed since I left Corinth; *and lest I should* find cause to *mourn over many who have sinned already, and* who, though several others have been wrought upon by my admonitions, *have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication, and lasciviousness, which they have committed*; against whom, therefore, I fear I shall find myself obliged, in virtue of my office, to pass such censures, as it pains and pierces my heart so much as to think of.

2 Cor. XII. 20.

21 *And* lest when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness, and fornication, and lasciviousness, which they have committed.

21

IMPROVEMENT.

How amiable was the goodness of the *apostle*, in adding *all* *patience* to those *signs* of his Divine mission, which were with so much splendor given among the *Corinthians*, when there were so many things to have excused, or rather to have vindicated his *severity*. Such meekness had he learned of *Christ*, such does he teach to succeeding *ministers* and private *Christians*. How disinterested was his behaviour in every part of it, not *seeking their substance, but their souls!* and indeed what is the greatest gain, which avarice, in its most artful and successful forms, can make of the *ministry*, when compared with *winning souls to Christ*, and bringing them into the *way of salvation?* Who, that deserves the name of a *Minister*, would not gladly sacrifice the views of worldly interest to this, and rejoice in an opportunity of *spending and of being spent for this?*

Ver. 12 14 15

Yet we see, that even this cannot always command the returns of *love*; but the love, as well as the praise, of men, is, in comparison, a matter of small importance. It will surely engage the approbation of God: and all the slights and injuries over which this benevolent disposition triumphs, will be remembered by him, with proportionable tokens of his gracious acceptance.

Happy was that prudence which made the proof of integrity so *clear*

16, 18

SECT. XX.

clear, and the appeal to the whole world so *confident*, as it here appears. So may we avoid every appearance of any thing which might beget a suspicion of sinister designs, that we may vindicate ourselves from every such insinuation, with the noble freedom of
Ver. 19 those who are *approved to God, and the consciences of men.* To preserve this, may we always *speak* and *act* as *before God, in Christ*, and do all things, not for the gratification of our own humour, or advancement of our secular interest, but for the *edification of others.*
20 The *ministers* of the *gospel* cannot but *be humbled*, when any thing contrary to the rules and genius of it is to be found among the people of their care and charge; whether they be pollutions of the flesh, or of the *spirit:* and they may be in some instances as effectually mortified and distressed, by *debates, envyings,*
21 *strifes, backbitings*, and *whisperings*, as by *uncleanness, fornication*, and *lasciviousness.* But when any of these things occur, as it is to be feared that in most *Christian* societies, or at least in such as are considerable for their numbers, they sometimes will; let it be remembered that they happen by the permission of Providence. God hath his wise ends in suffering what is indeed so lamentable: thus *humbling* the shepherd, that the flock may be farther *edified;* that he may approve his fidelity in more vigorous efforts for reformation; and may not be *excessively exalted* by that better success, wherewith, in other instances, God may crown his endeavours.

SECT. XXI.

The Apostle concludes his epistle with assuring the Corinthians very tenderly, how much it would grieve him to be obliged to shew his apostolic power, by inflicting any miraculous punishment on those who continued to oppose him; subjoining at the end of all proper salutations, and his solemn benediction. 2 Cor. XIII. 1, *throughout.*

SECT. XXI.

2 Cor. XIII. 1.

2 CORINTHIANS XIII. 1.

BUT I will return now from that digression which hath carried me away from what I was entering upon before. [*It is*] *now*, as I said (chap. xii. 14,) *the third time, that* I tell you, *I am coming to you*[a]; and as several cases will come

2 COR. XIII. 1.

THIS *is* the third time I am coming to you. In

a *The third time* I tell you *I am coming:* τριτον τουτο ερχομαι] So the words may be taken, though I own them ambiguous. Perhaps this may intimate, that this was the *third epistle* he had wrote to them, in which he had mentioned his purpose of coming, but we cannot certainly infer it. He seems here to resume the sentence he had

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2 Cor. XIII. 1.

In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.

come before me on which it will be necessary to give my judgment, I assure you, I shall think myself obliged to proceed on that reasonable maxim in the Jewish constitution, (Numb. xxxv. 30; Deut. xvii. 6; chap. xix. 15,) that *every word*, or thing, admitted for evidence in the decision, *shall be established by* the concurrence of what cometh from *the mouth of two or three* credible *witnesses*. And you will remember, that *I have* formerly *foretold* you, *and do foretel it* now again, *as if I were present the second time* in person; *and being absent* in body, but not in spirit, *I now write to those that have sinned already* in any scandalous and aggravated manner, *and to all the rest*, that they may take notice of it, and be filled with a sacred awe, *that if I come again, I will not spare* [*you*[b],] as I have hitherto done; but am determined, by the divine permission, to animadvert upon notorious offenders, by the exertion of that miraculous power with which God has endowed me. *Since*, after all the evidence you have already had, some of *you* are so strangely unreasonable, as to *seek a* further *proof of Christ speaking* by his spirit *in me*, even of the authority of that glorious and almighty Saviour, *who is not weak towards you, but powerful among you* by what he has already wrought[c], you may at length have such demonstrations of it, as may perhaps cost some of you dear. *For though he was* once *crucified* as *through* a state of *weakness*, submitting to those infirmities of mortal flesh, which put him into the hands of his enemies, and waving the exertion of that miraculous energy, by which he could so soon have rescued himself, and destroyed them; *nevertheless, he* now *liveth by the power of God* the Father, whereby he obtained a glorious resurrection, and is now ascended to a seat of

2 I told you before, and foretel you as if I were present the second time, and being absent now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that if I come again, I will not spare:

3 Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you.

4 For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God; for we also are weak

had begun, chap. xii. 14. Such interruptions are frequent in St. Paul, and in many other writers who have not a regard to an artificial dress, and do not stand to correct every little inaccuracy, but abound in quickness and variety of thought, as Mr. Locke justly observes.

b *I will not spare* you.] It is (as Bishop *Burnet* very justly observes,) a great confirmation of the *veracity* of the *apostles*, that when factions were raised against them, they used none of the *arts* of flattery, however necessary they might seem; but depended on the force of a *miraculous power* to reduce offenders; which it would have been a most absurd thing to have pretended to, if they had not *really* been conscious to themselves that it was engaged in their favour. *Burnet on the Art.* p. 62. See 1 Cor. iv. 21, *note* f.

c Already wrought.] This may, as Mr. Craddock and others observe, very probably refer to some miraculous punishment inflicted lately on the incestuous Corinthians.

d *Examine*

SECT. XXI.

of uncontrouled and universal authority. *And* thus *we* his apostles, though we *are also weak in him*, and to them who regard only external appearances, may seem contemptible, *nevertheless, shall live with him by the power of God*, manifested *to you* in our favour, to give a kind of resurrection to that apostolical authority which may have seemed for a while dormant and dead.

2 Cor. XIII. 4.

weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you.

5 You examine and try me; but let me admonish you to turn the search inward, and to *examine* and try *yourselves*, that ye may certainly know, *whether ye are in the faith*, whether ye be true Christians or not. For if you on a strict inquiry find that you are, you will therein find a proof of my being a true apostle; as it is by means of my extraordinary gift that you are become so. *Prove yourselves*[d], my brethren, whether you can, or cannot stand the test. *Do you not know yourselves*, when the subject of knowledge lies so near you, and is always before your eye? Are you not sensible *that Jesus Christ is* dwelling *in you* by the sanctifying and transforming influences of the Spirit; *unless ye are* mere nominal Christians, and such as, whatever your gifts be, will finally be *disapproved*[e] and rejected, as reprobate silver, that will not stand
6 the touchstone? *But* whatever be the case of any of you, *I hope ye shall* soon *know that we are not disapproved*, and have not lost[f] our evidence of the Divine presence and approbation.
7 *But* I am far from desiring to produce such evidences of it as would be grievous to you; and can truly say, that *I wish to God ye may do no evil* in any respect, *and not that we may be manifested* [*as*] *approved*, by such awful methods as those to which I refer: *but* on the contrary, *that ye may do what is* good, *beautiful*, and amiable, that which will adorn your profession in the most effectual manner; *though we should be as* if

5 Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith: prove your own selves: know ye not your own selves, *how* that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

6 But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates.

7 Now I pray to God that ye do no evil: not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates.

d *Examine yourselves—prove yourselves.*] Whether you be δοκιμοι, *such as can stand the test*; or αδοκιμοι, *such as cannot*, for that is the proper import of the word which we render *reprobates*. The difference between πειραζετε, and δοκιμαζετε, seems to be gradual: examine and *thoroughly* prove.

e *Unless ye are disapproved.*] Dr. Guyse paraphrases the words ει μη τι αδοκιμοι εστε, "unless there be something very disapprovable in you;" and it certainly expresses the *sense* with great propriety; but as the *apostle* supposes this to be something which would prove that Christ was not dwelling with and among them, it seems that it must be extended to the sense given in the paraphrase.

f Have not lost, &c.] It seems that the *possibility* of losing extraordinary gifts by the *abuse* of them, is finely insinuated in this *oblique* manner; and it might, if rightly understood, have its weight with many of them.

g *Being*

if we were *disapproved*, and upon a level with those who have no testimonials of an extraordinary mission to produce. *For we are not able to do any thing against the* interest of that important system of *truth* which God hath intrusted us with; *but* must strenuously act *for the* service of the *truth*, and support of the gospel, and not act by personal inclinations and affections, of resentment on the one hand, or tenderness on the other. SECT. XXI. 2 Cor. XIII. 8.

8 For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.

I wish the regularity of your behaviour at all events, as I declared above; *for we rejoice, when we are weak*, or seem so by not exerting any miraculous powers to the purposes we have hinted; *and* when *ye*, our dear converts and brethren, *are strong* in gifts and graces in faith, and good works: *and this also we wish* [*even*] *your being set in perfect* good *order*[g]. Your entire reformation would give us the greatest pleasure imaginable, a pleasure far beyond what we could derive from the most astonishing interpositions of God, to chastise those that rebel against us. 9

9 For we are glad when we are weak, and ye are strong; and this also we wish, *even* your perfection.

Therefore upon the whole, *I write these things* thus largely *being absent, that when* I am *present I may not* be obliged to *act severely according to the* Divine and extraordinary *power which the Lord* Jesus Christ *hath given me, for* the *edification* of the several members of his church, *and not for* the *destruction* of men's lives and comforts. And therefore it is that I give you this warning; in order to prevent what would otherwise be grievous to myself, as well as to you. 10

10 Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction.

As for what remains, my dear *brethren, farewel;* and may all joy and happiness ever attend you. And that this may be the case, let it *be* your great care, that ye may be *perfect*, that ye may arrive at the highest degrees of goodness. May you all *be comforted* with those strong consolations which true Christianity suggests, and exhorted and animated by the instructions it inculcates. *Attend to the same thing*[h], pursue with the greatest unanimity of heart, and intenseness of affection, that which ought to be the 11

11 Finally, brethren, farewel. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love

g *Being set in perfect* good *order.*] This I think the import of καταρτισιν, that *perfect reformation* which was not yet wrought, though something considerable had been done towards it.

h *Attend to the same thing.*] So το αυτο φρονειτε should undoubtedly be rendered rather than *be of one mind;* which in some respects might have been impossible. See my *Sermon on Candour and Unanimity*, and Phil. ii. 2, and note there.

i *Favour*

SECT. XXI.

the great end of all our schemes and designs, the care of glorifying God, and adorning the gospel. And as you have, in some instances, seemed to have forgotten how essential it is to true Christianity, that its professors should abstain from mutual injuries, and cultivate unfeigned friendship, let me urge it upon you that ye *be peaceful*, candid, and affectionate in your sentiments; *and the God of love and peace will* graciously own you as his children, and *be* favourably *with you*, and fix his residence among you. And in token of this entire harmony, and endeared affection, *salute each other* according to the custom of your assemblies, *with an holy kiss* as a proper expression of the purest and most ardent love. *All the saints*, that is, the Christians here, in the place from whence I now write, *salute you* with the sincerest affection, and will always rejoice to hear of your peace, prosperity, and edification.

2 Cor. XIII. 11. love and peace shall be with you.

12 Greet one another with an holy kiss.

13 All the saints salute you.

14 I conclude all with my most affectionate good wishes for you; even that *the* perpetual *favour of the Lord Jesus Christ*[i], the great Head of the church, in whom all the fulness of grace dwells; *and the* constant and peculiar *love of God* the Father, *and the* most abundant *communion* and fellowship *of the Holy Ghost*, in the richest anointings of his gifts and graces, may [*be*] *with you*, and rest upon you *all* continually, henceforth and for ever. *Amen:* may God ratify the important wish, so as to answer and exceed your most exalted hopes.

14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, *be* with you all. Amen.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 4 ADORED be the name of that compassionate *Redeemer*, who was once *crucified* as *through weakness;* and when he could have commanded more than *twelve legions of angels* to his rescue, voluntarily submitted to be seized and bound, like an helpless mortal, subject to superior force, and thus led away to torture and death! *He lives* for ever *by the power of God*, by a life derived from him: may we, *weak* as we are in ourselves, *live through him* to all the purposes of the *Christian* life.

And

i *Favour of the Lord Jesus Christ.*] I express χαρις by *favour* here; for if *grace* be taken for sanctifying influences communicated from Christ, (which to be sure makes a great part of the idea,) it may be less easy to distinguish it from the *communion of the Spirit.*—It is with great reason, that this comprehensive and instructive *benediction* is pronounced just before our assemblies for public worship are dismissed; and it is a very *indecent* thing to see so many quitting them, or getting into postures of remove, before this short sentence can be ended. Compare Numb. vi. 26, 27.

And that this life may flourish abundantly, let us be often engaged to *examine ourselves;* since it will be so great a scandal, and so great a snare, to be strangers at home. *Do we not* indeed after all *know ourselves?* Let us search, whether *Jesus Christ be in us?* Whether he be formed in our hearts, whether he live and act in us by his Holy Spirit? Else shall we be treated as *reprobate* silver, shall be justly *rejected* of God, and no gifts or privileges will avail us. Having gained the sure evidences of sincere goodness in ourselves, we may, with the greater cheerfulness and confidence, *pray for our brethren;* and let us offer the *Apostle's* petition for them, that they *may do no evil*, but every thing that is just and honourable, *beautiful* and lovely: never desiring to exalt ourselves on the mistakes and follies of others; but on the contrary, *wishing their perfection*, and labouring to the utmost to promote it. SECT. XXI. Ver. 5 6 9

How charming a spirit breathes in those sentences in which the *Apostle* takes his leave of the *Corinthians!* So much wisdom and goodness, that one is almost grieved, that he who bids *farewel* in such an engaging manner, does it *so soon*. Let us however bear his parting words in mind. When *ministers* are leaving those among whom they have laboured, when *Christian* friends are separated from each other, let this be their common petition and care, that they may be *improved* and *comforted;* that *unanimity* and *peace* may prevail and increase; and that the *God of peace may be with them all:* that he may be with them in those happy effects, and blessed operations, which will be the result of the *grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost.* 11, 12

How often hath this *comprehensive benediction* been pronounced! Let us *study* it more and more; that we may *value* it proportionably, that we set ourselves to *deliver*, or to *receive* it, with a becoming solemnity; with eyes and hearts lifted up to God, who, when *out of Zion he commandeth the blessing*, bestows in it *life for evermore. Amen!* 13

END OF THE SECOND OF CORINTHIANS.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR,

A PARAPHRASE

ON

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO THE

GALATIANS.

WITH

CRITICAL NOTES, AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.

A

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

THE GALATIANS.

THE churches of Galatia, which was a province of the Lesser Asia, were first converted to the Christian faith by the apostle Paul, about the latter end of the *year* 50, when passing through the region of Galatia, he was received with great affection, and made the instrument of planting several churches there; which, when he visited those parts again, in his next progress in the *year* 54, he had an opportunity of *confirming* in the doctrine that he before had taught them. (Compare Acts xvi. 6; xviii; 23. and Gal. iv. 13—15.)

From the contents of this *epistle* it appears, that after he had preached the gospel to the Galatians, some *judaizing zealots* had endeavoured to degrade the character of St. Paul among them, as one not immediately commissioned by Christ, as the other apostles were, and to subvert his doctrine in the grand article of *justification,* by insisting on the observation of the Jewish *ceremonies,* and so attempting to incorporate the *law* with *Christianity.* And as St. Paul expresses here to the Galatians his concern and wonder that they were *so soon* perverted from the doctrine he had preached, (chap. i. 6.) he therefore must have written this *epistle* not long after he had been among them; and as no hint is given through the whole of it, that he had been with them more than once, it is most reasonable to conclude, that it was *written* before his second journey to Galatia, and consequently not later than the *year of our* Lord 53, which was the 13th of the emperor Claudian. (See vol. VIII. sect. 41. *note* [i] p. 177.)

And

And though by the *subscription*, which is commonly placed at the end of it, this *epistle* is said to be *written from* Rome, yet if the latest date which some have given it should be allowed, which fixes it to the *year* 58, this could not be the place from whence it was written, as St. Paul then had never been at Rome, and none suppose him to have come there till after the *year* 60; which manifestly shews that the *subscription* ought to be rejected as a *spurious addition*, though it has been the means of leading many into a palpable mistake. See vol. VIII. sect. 44, *note*[a], p. 192. But dating it as above, in the *year* 53, it appears to be written from Corinth, where the apostle had sufficient time to *write it* as he did *with his own hand*, as he continued in that city near two years. Compare Acts xviii. 3, 11.

The principal *design* of the apostle Paul in this epistle, was "to assert and vindicate his apostolical authority and doctrine, and to establish and confirm the churches of Galatia in the faith of Christ, especially with respect to the important point of *justification*; to expose the errors that were introduced among them; and to revive those principles of Christianity that he had taught them when he first preached the gospel to them." And to this puspose,

First, He begins with an address adapted to his main design, in which he asserts his own *apostleship*, and hints at the provision made for our *justification* by Christ, expressing at the same time his most affectionate regard for the Galatian churches; (chap. i. 1—5. And then,

Secondly, He enters upon what he principally had in view,—to vindicate the authority of his *doctrine and mission*,—to prove that *justification* only can be had *by faith in Christ*, without the works of the law,—and to expostulate with the Galatians on their weakness and folly, in hearkening to *false teachers*, and being persuaded by them to become subject to the law, Where,

I. In vindication of the authority of his *doctrine* and *mission*,—after declaring his astonishment that the Galatians had *so soon* been led aside, under the influence of *seducing teachers*, from the simplicity of *that gospel* he had preached among them with the greatest faithfulness (ver. 6—10) he shews them,

(1.) That he received his *mission* and his *doctrine*, not from men, but by immediate revelation from Christ himself, who, when he was a persecuting zealot for the law, had called him by his grace to preach the gospel; in which he had immediately engaged without consulting any man, or making any application to the *other apostles* for instruction in his work, or for authority to perform it, (ver. 11, *to the end*).

(2) That in this interview with the apostles at Jerusalem, fourteen years after his conversion, he had maintained the *liberty of* Christians from the yoke of the law; and having communicated to the *chief of them* an account of his ministry, they were so far from disapproving either his doctrine or his practice, that they acknowledged the authority of his *mission*: and cordially embracing

ing him as a *brother apostle*, encouraged him to prosecute the work he was engaged in, and to continue preaching to the Gentiles ; (chap. ii. 1—10.) To which he adds,

(3.) That however some had represented him as inferior to the *other apostles*, and as a favourer of the *ceremonial law*, he had given sufficient proof of the contrary ; in that when Peter came to Antioch, the character of that apostle did not prevent his openly reproving him, for withdrawing from the conversation of the Gentile converts for fear of displeasing the Jews, and undermining by this means the *liberty* of the Christian church from Jewish impositions ; expostulating with him, how very inconsistent and absurd it was, that when they who were Jews had thought it necessary, from a full conviction of the insufficiency of *the law* to justify them, to embrace the *gospel*, and to believe in Christ for *justification*, they should endeavour after this to bring the Gentiles into subjection to the *law*, as if the dispensation introduced by Christ would leave them *under sin* without it. He was determined for his own part, that no such inconsistency should be found either in his doctrine or his practice ; and, having renounced all expectations from the *law*, his whole dependence was upon Christ *alone* for righteousness and life, (ver. 11, *to the end.)* Having thus entered on the main point he had in view, the apostle proceeds,

II. To prove, that *justification* only can be had *by faith in Christ* without the works of *the law*. And this he introduces, with reproving the Galatians for their instability with regard to this important doctrine ; which having been established by the death of Christ, and confirmed by the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, nothing could be more senseless than to turn from it to the carnal ordinances of the *law*, and so to lose the benefit of all their sufferings for the *gospel*, unmindful of the attestations that were given to the truth of it ; (chap. iii. 1—5.) And then, in confirmation of the doctrine he had reproved them for rejecting, he offers several arguments, and shews,

(1.) That as it was by faith Abraham was *justified*, so it is *by faith* that we become *his children*, and are partakers of the *blessing* with him ; (ver. 6—9.)

(2.) That the *law* pronounces *a curse* on every one who is in any instance guilty of transgresssing it ; and therefore, that it is not *by the law* we can be *justified*, but by *faith ;* (ver. 10—12.)

(3.) That Christ hath set us free from the condemning sentence of the law ; and as it is by him that we escape the *curse*, so we obtain the *blessing* only through *faith* in him ; (ver. 13, 14.)

(4.) That the stability of the *covenant of promise* to Abraham *and his seed* is such, that it could not be *vacated* by the *law*, which was given long after the *promise* was made, under the mediation of Moses, and between different parties ; and therefore, that it is not by the observance of the *law*, but only by *faith* in the promise, the benefit of *justification* and a title to eternal life can be obtained ; (ver. 15—18.)

(5.) That the *design* of God in giving the *law* was, not to *justify* but

but to *convince of sin*, as well as to restrain from the commission of it; and being intended only for a *temporary institution*, instead of *vacating the promise*, it was designed to be *subservient to it*, by shewing the necessity of a *better righteousness* than that of the *law*, and so to *lead* the awakened soul *to Christ*, that being *justified* by faith in him, we might obtain the benefit of the *promise*; (ver. 19—24.) And therefore,

(6.) That such is the advantage of the gospel-dispensation, that Christians are no longer under the discipline of the *law*; but being united unto Christ by faith, and so become *the sons of God*, both Jews and Gentiles are all one in him; and the distinctions which the *law* had made being done away, all true believers are *the seed of Abraham*, and *heirs* of the *blessing* with him, by virtue of the *promise*, and not by any title which the *law* could give; (ver. 25, *to the end.*)—But as the *heir* to an estate is in subjection, like a *servant*, under the government of guardians, during his *minority*; so were the Jews, before the *gospel* was revealed, like *children under age*, kept in subjection to the *law*; till at the time appointed for their entering on possession of the promised inheritance, as *sons* that were come to *maturity*, Christ was sent forth to answer all that the *law* demanded, and to *redeem* his people from their *bondage* to it; that being received by *faith in him* into the number of *the sons of God*, both Jews and Gentiles might be brought into a glorious *liberty*, and, being enabled by the Spirit to approach to God as their *Father*, they might enjoy the privilege and freedom of *heirs of God through Christ*, and be no more as *servants* under subjection to the *law*; (chap. iv. 1—7.) And hence the apostle takes occasion,

III. To expostulate with the Galatians on their weakness and folly in being so deluded by *false teachers*, as to give up the *liberty* of the *gospel*, and be persuaded to become subject to the *law*. And, to convince them how unreasonable and absurd their conduct was,

(1.) He observes, that they were formerly, as Gentiles, in bondage to the superstitions of the *heathen* worship, and now, that they were brought into a state of *liberty*, it was a strange infatuation they should be willing to submit again to *another servitude*, and to come under *bondage* to the unprofitable rites and ceremonies of the *law*; which gave him ground to *fear* his labour would be found in a great measure to have been lost upon them; (ver. 8—11.)

(2.) He reminds them of the *great affection* and regard they had expressed for *him* and his ministry when he *first* preached the gospel to them; and argues with them, what occasion he had given for the alteration of their disposition towards him, or how they could account for it, unless he was *become their enemy* by telling them the truth; (ver. 12—16.

(3.) He cautions them against the *base design* of their *false teachers*, who would alienate their hearts from *him*, to engross them to themselves; and intimates how fit it was they should retain the *same regard* to him and to the truth, now he was *absent*, as they had shewn when he was *present*; assuring them that he had still the

the same affectionate concern for *them*, and would be glad of coming to them, and finding matters better with them than he feared; (ver. 17—20.)

(4.) He illustrates the *advantage* of believers under the *gospel*, as to their privilege and *freedom*, above that of those under the *law*, by an *allegory* taken from the *two sons* of Abraham by Hagar and Sarah, as typical of the difference between the *two dispensations* of the *law* and *gospel*; of which the *former* was a state of *bondage*, and all that seek for *justification* by it are excluded like Ishmael from inheriting the *promise*; whereas the *latter* is a state of *freedom*, and those who come into this new and better dispensation, like Isaac, are the *children of the promise*, and are by faith entitled to the blessings of it; (ver. 21, *to the end.*)—This was the *freedom* they were brought into by Christ; and he exhorts them to be stedfast in it, and to beware of coming under a *servile yoke* by a subjection to the *law*; (chap. v. 1. And, to prevent their having any further thought of it,

(5.) He assures them, that by submitting to be *circumcised*, they became subject to the *whole burden* of the *law*, and could receive no benefit by Christ, but were *cut off* from all advantage they might have by the grace of the *gospel*, by seeking to be *justified* by their obedience to the *law*; while *he* and all true Christians looked for *justification* only by the *righteousness of Christ*, with reference to which it made *no difference* whether they were *circumcised* or not, if they had such a *faith* as *operates by love*; (ver. 2—6.) And therefore,

(6.) He calls them to consider whence it was that, after they had *set out well*, they were *drawn off* from that regard which they once had for the *truth* and liberty of the *gospel*; and shews them it was owing to the ill impressions made upon them by their *false teachers*, by whom he was unjustly charged with preaching up *circumcision*, of which *his sufferings* for the doctrine of *the cross* were a plain confutation; expressing at the same time *his hope* concerning them, that *they* would come to be *of the same mind* with him, and wishing *those* who had endeavoured to corrupt them were *cast out of the church*, that they might do no further mischief; (ver. 7—12.)—And now, as he was drawing to a close of his epistle, according to his usual method,

THIRDLY, He offers several *practical directions* to them, and exhorts them to a behaviour answerable to their *Christian calling*, and to the institution of the *gospel*, as a *doctrine according to godliness*. Where,

(1.) He takes occasion from his mentioning their *Christian liberty* to caution them against *abusing it* to an indulgence of the *flesh*, and to the breach of *Christian charity*; and urges them to *mutual love*, as what they were obliged to both by the *law* and *gospel*, and which if they neglected, and gave way to animosities and *contentions*, they would be exposed to ruin and destruction; (ver. 13—15.)

(2.) He exhorts them to a *conversation* suitable to the dispensa-

tion of *grace* they had received, by a compliance with the influences of the *Spirit*, in opposition to the workings of the *flesh*; and, giving a description of the different *fruits* of each, shews, that as Christians they were obliged to *crucify the flesh* with its corrupt affections, and to obey the dictates of the *Spirit*, in a continual exercise of all the graces of it; and warns them, in particular, against *pride* and *vain glory*; (ver. 16, *to the end.)*

(3.) He recommends it to them to *deal tenderly* with those who are *overtaken in a fault*, endeavouring to *restore them*, with a compassionate regard to their infirmities, by a *meek* and gentle treatment, as those who would *fulfil the law of Christ*; and cautions them, instead of entertaining a conceited notion of *their own sufficiency*, as if they were not liable to fall as well as others, or being pleased with the high sentiments that *others* have of them, to *examine their own work*, whether it be such as may afford them *ground of rejoicing*, since every one must be accountable for *his own behaviour*, and shall at last be *dealt with*, not according to the vain imagination he has of himself, or the good opinion of others concerning him, but according to what he really is, and the true character that he is found to bear; (chap. vi. 1—5.)

(4.) He presses it upon them as their duty, to be *free* and *liberal* in contributing to the support and maintenance of *their ministers*, assuring them that plausible *excuses* in a point of duty would fatally *deceive* those that made use of them, and every one should *reap* according as he *sowed*; and therefore urges them *not to be weary in well-doing*, but to lay hold of every opportunity for *doing good to all*, especially to their *fellow Christians*; (ver. 6—10.)

And now, the apostle having written this epistle *with his own hand*, and given this testimony of his affectionate regard to the Galatians, sums up the *main design of it* as the close of all (ver. 11, *to the end)*, and shews,—that as to their *false teachers* it was for *selfish ends*, and not from any veneration for the *law*, they pressed them to be *circumcised*, that by this means they might keep up their reputation with the Jews, and might not only save themselves from *persecution*, but *glory* also in the number of their *proselytes*; while, *for his own part*, he had *no worldly views*, and would not *glory* but in *the cross of Christ*, by whom alone it is that *justification* can be had. This was the doctrine that he preached, nor should the fear of *persecution* make him to disguise it, for it was only in this way that any could be *justified* and saved; and, whether they were *circumcised* or not, if they were made *new creatures*, and acted by this principle, *mercy and peace* should be *upon them*, as the true *Israel of God*. No one should therefore *trouble him any more* with urging the necessity of *circumcision*, or with suggesting he himself was for it, when he had shewn *his zeal* for the pure doctrine of the *gospel* by his *sufferings* for it; the *marks* of which were a plain evidence of his regard to Christ, and such a proof of his *sincerity*, as might well serve to vindicate *his character*, and to confirm the *truth* of what he had taught them.—And, having thus reminded them of the *main view* he had in writing this *epistle*, he concludes it with a solemn *apostolical benediction*.

A PARA-

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

THE GALATIANS.

SECT. I.

The Apostle Paul, after a general and proper salutation, expresses his surprise and concern, that the Galatian Christians had so soon suffered themselves to be led aside from the simplicity of that gospel which he had first planted amongst them. Gal. I. 1—10.

GAL. I. 1.
PAUL an apostle (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father,

GALATIANS I. 1.

SECT. I.

YOU receive this epistle from *Paul*, who hath the honour to stand in the character of *an apostle* of the Christian church; an important office which he did *not* presumptuously arrogate to himself, nor receive *from* the appointment or authority of *men*, as the original, *nor by* the choice or intervention of any *man* upon earth, as the instrument of his mission; whatever the factious teachers, who are endeavouring to disturb you, may have represented: *but* I am capable of giving you the most convincing evidence, that I had an immediate call to this honourable charge *by Jesus Christ* the great Head of the church, who did himself in person appear to me again and again (Acts ix. 4; xxii. 18), *and* sent me forth to be his witness unto all men, according to the sovereign choice of *God the Father* (Acts xxii. 14, 15), *who hath raised*

Gal. I. 1.

SECT. i. Gal. I. 1.

him from among *the dead*[a], and therein laid the great foundation of our faith in him for righteousness and life, and our reliance on him as the Son of God and the only Saviour of men.

Father, who raised him from the dead;)

2 *And* while I am thus addressing myself to you, *all the* Christian *brethren*, especially the ministers[b], *who are with me* here at Corinth, join with me in the sentiments I am going to propose, and in the most friendly and affectionate salutations *unto the churches of Galatia*, whom they cordially love, notwithstanding any difference in form and opinion which at present may

2 And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia;

3 subsist among them[c]. It is our most unfeigned ardent prayer, that the richest communications of divine *grace* and favour may [*be*] imparted *to you*, with all the blessings of prosperity *and peace* of every kind, *from God the Father*, the great original and fountain of all good, *and* [*from*] *our Lord Jesus Christ*, the purchaser and

3 Grace *be* to you, and peace from God the Father; and *from* our Lord Jesus Christ,

4 dispenser of it; *Who* graciously and compassionately *gave himself* up to the severest sufferings as an atoning sacrifice *for our sins*, *that he might* thus *deliver us* by the efficacy of his death *from* the destructive snares and condemnation that attend *this present evil world*[d], from the pre-

4 Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world,

a *Who hath raised him from the dead.*] Mr. L'Enfant thinks these words are added to obviate an objection which might be raised against Paul's mission, from his not having received a commission from Christ, like the other *apostles*, while he was here on earth —But the minds of the *apostles* appear to be always full of the joyful idea of *Christ's resurrection*, and therefore it is no wonder that out of the fulness of their hearts they should seize every opportunity of speaking of it. Compare Rom. i. 4; 1 Thess. i. 10; Heb. i. 3; 1 Pet. i. 3; and a multitude of other texts.—To which it may be added, that it is with great propriety the *apostle* mentions here, that *God hath raised him from the dead*, as agreeable to the main point he had in view, which was to assert the doctrine of *justification by faith in Christ*; since God declared, by *raising him from the dead*, that he accepted the atonement Christ had made, and gave him a discharge from any further claim upon him for the satisfaction of his justice: and as it is this, that is the great foundation of our *faith in Christ*, so the *apostle* says elsewhere, that he *was raised again for our justification*: Rom. ix. 25.

b *The brethren*, especially the ministers.] As the titles of *brethren* and *saints* are applied to different persons, and *ministers* seem to be distinguished by being called *brethren*, Phil. iv. 21, 22, they are probably here intended.

c Notwithstanding any difference in form and opinion, &c.] Though the Christians at Corinth were most of them *converted Gentiles*, and these of Galatia were strongly prejudiced in favour of the Jewish ceremonies; yet the *apostle* expresses their *affection* towards these their brethren, and that with great propriety, that he might thereby invite them to a suitable return of love. On the same principle he reminds them (ver. 4), of the blessings which as Christians they shared in common, that he might endear them the more to those who were joined with them in such happy bands.

d *From this present evil world.*] The words εκ τȣ ενεςωτος αιωνος πονηρȣ are ambiguous, and some would render them, *from the evil of this present world*; which makes a very good sense; but had it been intended by the *apostle*, I think the article τȣ would have been repeated. (Compare John xvii. 15.)—Mr. Locke argues from 1 Cor. ii. 6, 8, that αιων ȣτος signifies the Jewish nation under the Mosaic constitution; and supposes these words to contain an intimation, that God intended to

world, according to the will of God and our Father:

predominant vices of the age, and from the ruin they will bring on all who shall continue in the practice of them, whether Jews or Gentiles, which glorious design he generously undertook *according to the* merciful and saving *will of God, even our Father*, who chose this wisest and happiest method of recovering us to himself: *To whom* therefore, for this adorable and matchless grace to sinful creatures, [*be*] *glory* and praise *for ever and ever. Amen.* SECT. i. Gal. I. 4. 5

5 To whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

6 I marvel, that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ, unto another gospel:

Since then is the only way of being justified and saved, it gives me great concern, and *I am* quite *astonished*, my beloved brethren, *that* after ye have been instructed in it, and seemed to have received the truth in the love of it, *ye are so soon removed*[e] *from* a due regard to *him that called you* into this method of salvation *by* and through *the grace of Christ*[f], and who continues still in the same sentiments as when he was at first the happy instrument of bringing you to an acquaintance with it; that ye are so soon removed, I say, *unto* what may almost be called *another gospel*[g], as being so entirely inconsistent with the very fundamentals of that which you were originally taught concerning our free justification by Divine grace on our believing, without the works of the Mosaic law. 6

7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and

But indeed, to speak more exactly, that system of doctrines *which* you have so rashly and unhappily received, *is not* in strict propriety *another* gospel, nor worthy the name of gospel at all: 7

to take the Jews themselves *out of it*, so far was he from any purpose of bringing the Gentiles under it. But as it is certain that αιων often signifies the same with κοσμος, that is, *the world* (see Mat xiii. 39, 40; 2 Cor. iv. 4; and Tit. ii. 12; which last place seems exactly parallel to this), I think it would be very unreasonable to limit so noble and expressive a clause by so narrow an interpretation.

e *That ye are so soon removed.*] It appears from the beginning of the *general introduction* to this epistle, that Paul had preached the gospel first to the Galatians, and planted several churches in that country, in his passing through it (Acts xvi. 6), about the latter end of the *year* 50, He visited them again (Acts xviii. 23) in the *year* 54; and he seems to have written this epistle before that visit. He had reason therefore to wonder that their sentiments were *so quickly* changed, and that such warm affections as they then bore him (chap. iv. 14, 15) were *so soon* and so greatly alienated.

f *From him that called you by the grace of Christ.*] If it be here considered that the expression in the original is εν χαριτι, that is, *by* or *through the grace of Christ*, (as our translation renders it elsewhere, 2 Cor. i. 12; 2 Thess. ii. 16), and not *into the grace*; there is no difficulty in admitting that the apostle Paul points out *himself* by *him that called them* (as he may likewise afterwards, chap. v. 8), nor is there any thing more assuming in it than in his speaking of *himself* as *he that ministered the Spirit to them.* Chap. iii. 5.

g *Unto another gospel.*] Mons. *Saurin* observes (*Serm.* Vol. XI. p. 46), that the Galatians were a colony of the Gauls, that is, of the ancient inhabitants of France; who, says he, have been always reproached with taking impressions easily, and as easily suffering them to be effaced.

h *Or*

SECT. i.

all: *but* this in short is the case, that *there are some* seducing and Pharisaical teachers, *who*, for their own unworthy ends, have gone about to *trouble you* with false insinuations, and *are desirous* to do their utmost *to subvert* and overthrow *the gospel of Christ*, which hath been preached to you in so pure and powerful a manner.

and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

Gal. I. 7.

8 You know the doctrine that was first delivered to you under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit: and whatsoever may have been suggested, as if Peter and the other apostles, and even I myself, do sometimes preach up the works of the law, as necessary to be joined with faith in Christ for justification, let no such principles be admitted by you: *but though we*, or any other apostle, not excepting the most honourable and illustrious names, *or* even *an angel from heaven*[h], if that were possible, should *preach any other gospel among you than that which we have* already *preached unto you*, and confirmed by such apparent and uncontrouled miracles, *let him* not only *be* rejected, but pronounced an *anathema*, and be devoted to a perpetual and most dreadful curse.

8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

9 Nor is it by any sudden flight of zeal that I express myself thus; but *as we have said* but just *before*, *so say I now again*, and solemnly repeat it as my deliberate judgment, *If any one*, whatever, whether man or angel, *preach any other gospel to you than that which ye have received* already from our lips, and which indeed ye have been taught by us from Christ himself, *let him be anathema*, and look upon him with as much detestation as you would on the most execrable creature in the universe.

9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

10 I speak with all this freedom from the sure consciousness of my own integrity: *for* after all that I have done and suffered for the truth, *do I now solicit the favour of men, or of God*[i]*?* Do I endeavour in my ministry to ingratiate myself with men, or to approve myself to God? *Or do I*, in the general course of my conduct, *seek to please*

10 For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men?

h *Or an angel from heaven.*] Some have imagined that the *apostle* here refers to the pretences which Cerinthus is said to have made to his receiving a revelation from the hand of *an angel*; but I see no proof that this pretension was made *so early*, if indeed it were made at all.

i *Solicit the favour of men, or of God?*] Ανθρωπους πειθω, η τον Θεον; It is by a great latitude that the *Prussian version* renders this, "The doctrine which I would here persuade, is it that of men or of God?" The connection seems to demonstrate that πειθω here signifies, *seek to persuade* or *to ingratiate himself with* the one or the other, though it be acknowledged to be a less common sense. Compare Acts xii. 20; xiv. 19; xix. 26.

k *In-*

men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

please men by a compliance with their prejudices or designs? I have no party-views, as I had formerly before I was converted (Acts ix. 1, 2), nor any intention to pursue the schemes and serve the purposes of men; for *if indeed*[k] *I yet pleased men*, by soothing their humour and flattering their vanity, *I should not be the servant of Christ;* I should not deserve the name of a Christian, and much less that of a minister and an apostle, and must indeed change the whole system of my doctrine, if I would render it agreeable to human prejudices.

SECT. i.

Gal. I. 10.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us adore the name of that blessed Redeemer *who gave himself* a sacrifice *for our sins:* and may the consideration of his gracious purpose in doing it have its efficacy, *to deliver us from this present evil world*, and to raise our hearts to *that* to which *the Father* hath exalted him, by whom he was *raised from the dead; to whom*, for all the purposes of his grace in the whole scheme of our redemption, *be glory for ever and ever.* Ver. 4, 1, 5

Let the remembrance of this compassionate Saviour, who is *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*, engage us to be stedfast in the profession of his religion, and to be upon our guard against all who would *pervert the gospel.* May his *ministers* especially be exceeding cautious how they do any thing that looks like corrupting it; since such a dreadful *anathema* is pronounced against an *apostle*, or an *angel*, who should attempt it! 7, 8, 9

Who can be superior to every alarm on this head that considers the case of the *Galatians*, who, though they *received the gospel* from the lips of such an apostle as *Paul*, could be *so soon removed*, and drawn aside to a quite different system? But God made a gracious provision for their being recovered, and confirmed in the primitive faith, by this *epistle;* which was intended also to be a security to us, that we might learn from hence the purity and simplicity of the Christian doctrine, and be established in *the truth as it is in Jesus.* 6

Let the *ministers of Christ* faithfully preach it, *not as seeking to please men*, but that *God who trieth the hearts;* and who can only be *pleased* by an entire surrender of the soul to that system of truth and duty which he hath condescended to teach, and by a faith- 10

k *Indeed.*] That γαρ is often used to signify *indeed*, see note q on Acts xix. 40, Vol. VIII. p. 199.

a *Nor*

SECT. i. faithful care to spread its genuine and salutary maxims as widely as they can, without any addition or diminution. To *solicit the favour of men*, and to endeavour to oblige them, by sacrificing
Ver. 10 such sacred considerations to any of their prejudices and follies, is to act in a manner utterly unbecoming *a servant of Christ*; and so unworthy a conduct in such as bear the character of *ministers*, may justly provoke the indignation of their Divine Master to make them as *contemptible* as they suffer themselves to become *unfaithful*.

SECT. II.

To vindicate his doctrine to the Galatians, and to remove the prejudices that were raised against it, Paul shews them it was not received from men; and, as a proof of the Divine authority of his mission, gives some account of facts which immediately succeeded his conversion from a persecuting zeal against Christianity to the profession of it. Gal. I. 11, *to the end.*

SECT. ii.

GALATIANS I. 11.

Gal. I. 11. SOME have indeed attempted to reflect upon my doctrine, and to depreciate the authority of my commission as an apostle: *but I certify you, brethren*, and declare in the most determinate language I am capable of using, *that*, whatever my enemies, who herein are yours likewise, may insinuate to the contrary, *the gospel which has* every where *been preached by me, is not according to* the tradition or invention of *man*, nor in any way adulterated and debased to suit the relish, or to favour the prejudices, of those to
12 whom it was to be delivered. *For I neither received* my commission to preach *it from* the authority or interposition of any *man* whatever, *nor was I taught* [*it*] by any written memoirs, or any other human method of instruction[a]; *but* in a most extraordinary and miraculous way I was enlightened in it, and authorized to preach it,

GAL. I. 11.

BUT I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me, is not after man.

12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it* but

a *Nor was I taught it*, &c.] If it should be objected here, that Ananias would undoubtedly instruct Paul in the principles of the gospel before he baptized him, it may be replied, not only that Ananias was no such considerable person that Paul should be suspected by the Galatians to have been modelled by him; but that it seems, when Ananias first came to him, Paul was so well acquainted with the principles of Christianity, which he had been instructed in *by revelation* during the *three days* of his blindness, that Ananias could not judge it necessary to instruct him as a catechumen; which is the more probable, as it appears *the Lord* had told him Paul was before acquainted *by a vision* with the purpose of his coming to him. See Acts ix. 12.

b *In*

but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

it, *by the* immediate *revelation of Jesus Christ* himself, who communicated to me by inspiration the knowledge of salvation by faith in him, and sent me forth to publish the glad tidings of the gospel. SECT. ii. Gal. I. 12.

13 For ye have heard of my conversation in time past, in the Jews religion, *how* that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:

This you already know, though I touch upon it again as a truth of so great importance: *for you* undoubtedly *have heard of my conversation* and character *in time past*, particularly in my youthful days, and to the happy time when I became acquainted with the gospel; that I was such a violent bigot *in* the profession of *Judaism*[b], and so implacable an enemy to the followers of Christ, *that I unmeasurably persecuted* with the most insatiable rage *the church of God*, which I now esteem it my greatest honour to edify and serve, though I was then intent upon its ruin, *and ravaged it*, with all the fury of a beast of prey. 13

14 And profited in the Jews religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

And such was my regard for all the Jewish rites and customs, that *I made proficiency in* the knowledge and practice of *Judaism*, *beyond many of my own nation*, [*who were*] *my equals* in age, and of the same standing with myself in the study of the law; *being more abundantly* and passionately *zealous for the* hereditary maxims and *traditions of my fathers*, on which the Pharisaic sect lays so much stress. 14

15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called *me* by his grace,

But when at length *it pleased God*, *who* in the secret purposes of his mercy had set apart and *separated me* to this office *from my mother's womb* (as he did Jeremiah to that of a prophet, Jer. i. 5), having determined to employ me as a minister of his gospel; *and* who afterwards *called* [*me*] *by* such an astonishing display and energy of *his grace*, while I was actually engaged in opposition to his cause and interest; 15

16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I con-

When it pleased him, I say, *to reveal* by vision and inspiration *his Son* Christ Jesus *in me*, and thus to give me a discovery of the glories of his person, and of his righteousness and grace, *that I might* not only know him for my own salvation, but also in due time, when Providence should open a convenient way, might *preach him among the Gentiles*[c], as well as among the Jews, to whom my 16

b *In Judaism.*] Mr. L'Enfant well observes that this does not signify the *religion* originally taught by Moses, but that which was practised among the Jews at this time, and much of it built upon the *traditions of the elders.*

c *That I might preach him among the Gentiles.*] This was undoubtedly the scheme

SECT. ii.

my addresses were at first confined; *immediately* my heart was overpowered, and all my prejudices so entirely removed, that *I conferred not with flesh and blood*[d], and stood not to consider what would be most subservient to my worldly interest, or to consult with any mortal man about engaging in the work to which I had so clear a call. *Nor did I* at that time *go up to Jerusalem to them that were apostles before me*, to be instructed more particularly in the doctrines I should preach, that there might be no inconsistencies between us, or to apply to them for a commission to perform my office: *but*, having entered on my ministry, and preached the word at Damascus (Acts ix. 20), *I went* for a while *into Arabia*, where I could have no opportunity of being taught by any man, as none of the apostles had been there before me; *and* from thence I *returned again to Damascus*, where I boldly declared the necessity of believing in Christ for salvation, even in the presence of those Jews whom I knew to be most strongly prejudiced against that important doctrine.

Gal. I. 16.

17

Then at length, *after three years* from the time of my conversion, *I went up to Jerusalem to visit* and converse with *Peter*, by whom, when he had heard from Barnabas an account of my

18

I conferred not with flesh and blood:

17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem, to them which are apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter,

scheme of providence concerning Paul, who was accordingly distinguished by the character of *the apostle of the Gentiles*; but if his conversion happened, as we suppose, about the *year* 35, and Peter's preaching to Cornelius in the *year* 39, then, since it is incontestably evident that the Gentiles first heard the gospel by the mouth of Peter, it would follow that Paul did not at first understand the full extent of his commission, and therefore, when he first began to preach, confined his labours to the *synagogues* at Damascus, which is indeed intimated, Acts ix. 20—22.

d *Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.*] Dr. Wells and some others understand this as if the *apostle* had said, "*Immediately* after the recovery of my sight, without conferring with any man in the world, or so much as applying to Ananias himself for advice, I retired by Divine direction into the desert of Arabia; where, after some time spent in devotion, I had *a full revelation* made to me of the most important facts and doctrines of Christianity [which some suppose to be *the rapture* referred to, 2 Cor. xii. 3], and then, after my return from thence, preached at Damascus for the first time." (See *Well's Geog.* Vol. III. p. 275.) And Mr. Locke insists that ευθεως here does not refer to his *immediately* engaging in the work of the *ministry* without applying for advice to any man, but to his going into Arabia.—But the same word is used by Luke in his history of the Acts, who, without taking any notice of Paul's departure into Arabia, says, that after he recovered strength, he tarried *certain days* at Damascus, and (ευθεως) *immediately preached Christ* in the synagogues. Acts ix. 19, 20. So that it seems most probable to me, that, after his conversion, Paul was so well instructed in the knowledge of the gospel by the *revelation* that was then made to him, that he *immediately* began, without consulting any man, to preach the word at Damascus, before he went from thence into Arabia; which is most suitable to the natural order of the words, and best agrees with the account of his first entering on his ministry in the Acts. See Vol. VIII. sect. xx. *note* h, p. 42.

ter, and abode with him fifteen days.

my conversion and my preaching at Damascus, I was cordially received as one whom the Lord had called; *and I abode* there *with him* at his house but *fifteen days*, to have the pleasure of discoursing with him on the mutual success of our ministry, and not with the least view of receiving any farther authority from him. SECT. ii. Gal. I. 18.

19 But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

But I saw no one of the apostles then *besides, except* it were *James, the brother* or near kinsman *of the Lord* Jesus[e]; for all the rest of that sacred society were absent at that time on their respective missions. 19

20 Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.

Now with respect to all these circumstances, [*as to*] *the things which I write unto you*, you may give the most entire credit to them, how little soever they may consist with some reports that have been artfully spread abroad concerning me; for *behold*, I solemnly profess to you *before God*, that *I do not lie* or falsify in the least degree[f], but with all possible frankness and sincerity speak what I assuredly know to be the most certain truth. 20

21 Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia;

Afterwards departing from Jerusalem, *I came into the regions of Syria; and* from thence I passed into my native country of *Cilicia*, to exercise my ministry there, and to bring, if possible, those among whom I was born to the knowledge of Christ and of the doctrine of salvation by him. 21

22 And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea, which were in Christ.

And during all this time, as I had only just passed through their country in my way, *I was unknown by face to the* several *churches of Christ which were in Judea*, as well as to the greater part of my brethren the apostles: so that I could learn nothing of the contents of the gospel from any of them: 22

23 But they had heard

But only they had 23

e *James, the brother* or near kinsman *of the Lord* Jesus.] He was the son of Alpheus and Mary, the sister of the *virgin*, so that James was cousin-german to Jesus.—This visit to Jerusalem, (which is mentioned Acts ix. 26, *& seq.*), as it was *three years* after his conversion, appears to have been in the *year* 38; and, after Paul had preached so long before, it cannot be supposed he was instructed how to preach the gospel in the short stay he now made at Jerusalem, where he saw only *two* of the *apostles*.

f *Before God, I do not lie.*] A revelation of the facts and doctrines of Christianity immediately from Jesus Christ himself, without the assistance of any human teacher, so wonderfully agreeing in all its branches with that which Christ had taught on earth both before and after his resurrection, was so extraordinary an event, and of so great importance to those whom St. Paul visited and to whom he wrote, that one cannot wonder he should think proper to assert it in so solemn a manner. We have great reason, while we read the *attestation* he has given to the truth of what he says, to acknowledge that it is of a piece with the many *signs* and *wonders* attending both his conversion and his ministry; which Mr. Lyttleton has so admirably illustrated in his *Observations on the Conversion, &c. of St. Paul.*

SECT. ii.

had heard this wonderful account in general, which might well spread through all the land, *that he who* so cruelly *persecuted us in times past* to imprisonment and death, was become a convert to the victorious truth and grace of the gospel, so that he *now preacheth the* same Divine *faith which he formerly ravaged* and laid waste to the utmost of his power, and would, if possible,

Gal. I. 23.

heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past, now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.

24 have totally destroyed and extirpated: *And they glorified God on my account*, as they well might, beholding in me so illustrious an instance of the power and sovereignty of his grace.

24 And they glorified God in me.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. LET us also, at this distance of time and country, join with 24 them in *glorifying God* in the *apostle;* in adoring the grace that engaged him to *preach the faith he would once have destroyed*, and 23 at length to add *his own blood* to that of the *martyrs of Christ* which he had shed. Still hath the great Head of the church the same omnipotent efficacy, the same ability to influence the heart, to overcome the strongest prejudices, and to turn bigots into true believers; and, rather than his church shall want its servants and its ornaments, he will find them among its most cruel enemies.

17, 18 Had the gospel been taught *St. Paul* by *Ananias*, or *Peter*, or 19 any of the *apostles*, his readiness to receive it from such teachers, and to preach it at the certain expence of his *reputation*, his *interest*, and his *life*, would no doubt have ranked him among the most illustrious witnesses to the truth of *Christianity*. But this 11, 12 additional fact of an *original revelation* of the whole system of it to him independent of *human teaching*, deserves our admiration, and demands our praise.

15 God herein wrought according to the secret counsel of his Divine will, and that purpose by which he had *separated* Paul *from the womb*. In vain was it opposed by the prevailing prejudices of 13, 14 his education, or by the violence of his *zeal for Judaism*, and that *proficiency in it* by which he had eclipsed so many of his *co-temporaries*, and those *of his own nation*. All his zeal for the *traditions of his fathers* gave way to a yet greater zeal for a nobler 21, 22 object; a zeal, which carried him through *Arabia* and *Syria*, through *Judea* and *Cilicia*, and prevented him, in one sense as well 16 as another, from *consulting with flesh and blood*, from being influenced by any selfish worldly views, or giving heed to any man's opinion.

Adored

Adored be the grace that animated and supported him in overcoming every difficulty; and having so miraculously furnished him for the great work that he was called to, made him so gloriously successful in it. So may we be enabled to surmount every obstacle! and so may we be taught, as to *those things* which we have most highly esteemed, *to count them all but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ*, and to grudge no labour, self-denial, or suffering, by which the gospel may be any way promoted or adorned, and a testimony given of our faithful subjection to it? SECT. ii. Ver. 16.

SECT. III.

The Apostle, in prosecution of that design on which he entered in the preceding section, informs the Galatians of his journey from Antioch to Jerusalem, and of his interview with the apostles there, fourteen years after his conversion. Gal. II. 1—10.

GAL. II. 1.
THEN fourteen years after, I went up again to Jerusalem, with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also.

GALATIANS II. 1.

I HAVE just been telling you, that quickly after my journey from Damascus to Jerusalem I traversed the regions of Syria and Cilicia, being *then* in a great measure unknown to the churches in Judea, otherwise than by my general character, and what they had heard of the surprising change wrought in me; I am now to add, that about *fourteen years after* my conversion[a], when I had preached the word some time at Antioch, *I went up again to Jerusalem, with Barnabas*, to consult with the church there upon the grand question of the freedom of the Gentiles from the Mosaic law, (Acts xv. 2.) *and I took Titus also with me*[b], though he was uncircumcised SECT. iii. Gal. II. 1.

a *Fourteen years after.*] As it is certain that Paul saw both Peter and James in that journey to Jerusalem of which we have an account, Acts xv. 4, *& seq.* it is very natural to suppose he would mention it here, and that *this* is the journey which he now refers to (compare Vol. VIII. sect. xxxiii. *note* a, p. 122, and ver. 9, of *this chapter;*) and as we have found reason to believe that the *council* then held at Jerusalem did not happen later than the *year* 49, it seems reasonable to reckon the *fourteen years* here mentioned from his *conversion*, and not from the conclusion of those travels through Syria and Cilicia which he had mentioned ver. 21, of the *foregoing chapter;* for as we cannot suppose him to have finished his tour through those countries in much less than *four years* after his *conversion*, such a computation will bring back that ever memorable event to the *year* 31, which was *two years* before Christ's death.—He does not here mention his going up to Jerusalem in the *year* 43, with what had been collected at Antioch for the poor brethren in Judea (of which we read Acts xi. 29, 30; xii. 25,) because he then *saw none* of the *apostles*; and the question here was about the opportunities he might have had of *conversing with them.*

b *Took Titus also with me.*] This is the earliest mention that we meet with of Titus; for he is no were mentioned by St. Luke in the Acts, and what we read of him in the *second epistle* to the Corinthians, (2 Cor. ii. 13; vii. 6, 14; viii. 6,) as well as in that to Timothy, (2 Tim. iv. 10,) was later by some years. He is here said

SECT. iii.

uncircumcised, that I might therein shew my Christian liberty, and assert that of my Gentile brethren, against those who were so zealous in their attempts to invade it. *But I* then *went up*, not to receive instructions in my work from any of the apostles there, or to be confirmed in my office by them, but *by* the appointment of a special *revelation* [c], and to subserve a very different and important purpose, in which the peace and liberty of the church were much concerned. *And* when I was arrived there, and had the pleasure of meeting my brethren, I explained at large and freely *laid before them* the contents of *that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles*, not only so far as it relates to the exemption of the Gentile converts from any obligation to observe the Mosaic law, but likewise with respect to the deliverance of the Jews themselves from the bondage of it: which gave them an opportunity of seeing how fully I was instructed in the mind of Christ, and how little I needed any farther teachings from them. But this account however I gave, not in a public assembly, *but privately* [d] *to those who were of* greatest *note* and reputation in the church; *lest* some should have been found who would have cavilled at it, and by abusing some of the particulars,

Gal. II. 2.

2 And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means

said to have been a Greek, (ver. 3,) and being born of *Gentile parents* was not circumcised; but where or when he was *converted* is uncertain: only we may conclude he was converted by St. Paul, from the title he gives him of *his own son after the common faith*, (Tit. i. 4;) and as he now took Titus with him from Antioch to Jerusalem, so he employed him afterwards on several occasions, and appears to have regarded him with great affection and endearment.

c *Went up by revelation.*] Dr. Whitby supposes in his *note* upon this place, that as St. Paul had said before that he received the gospel which he preached *by the revelation of Jesus Christ*, (chap. i. 12,) he only means by what he now declares, that he went up *according to the revelation* which he then received, and in this journey acted suitably *to that revelation* which had constituted him *the apostle of the Gentiles*, telling the church at Jerusalem what things he had done among the Gentiles in pursuance of it. But it seems rather to be here implied (as I have observed elsewhere, Vol. VIII. sect. xxxiii. *note* a,) p. 122, that in their sending Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, the church at Antioch were directed *by a revelation* made, either immediately to Paul himself, or to some other of the *prophets* there, relating to the important business they were sent upon.

d *But privately.*] I have elsewhere shewn at large, that the *secret* here referred to was not, as has been so confidently asserted, his *preaching* the gospel to the *idolatrous Gentiles*," which was a fact it cannot be supposed he should endeavour to conceal from any: but the point which he communicated thus *in private*, was the *exemption*, not of the *Gentile converts* only, but of the *Jews themselves*, from the observance of the Mosaic ceremonies, as what they were no longer bound to under the gospel, any farther than as the peace and edification of others were concerned." On this as (I have shewn) there were sufficient reasons why he should choose to be *on the reserve* at present; yet when the purpose of his journey had been answered, and he had left Jerusalem, he used great fredom afterwards in publicly declaring his opinion. See Vol. VIII. sect. xxxiii. *note* d, p.123, and sect xxxv. *note* a.p.135.

means I should run, or had run in vain.

particulars, would have represented us as differing from each other; in consequence of which it might be feared, *I should* hereafter *run, or* hitherto *had run in vain*, as the good effects of my future or past labours would have been lessened or obstructed by the increase of their prejudices; and in particular, the intent of my journey to Jerusalem might have been hindered, had I then opened my thoughts too fully in the presence of a large and promiscuous assembly.

SECT. iii.

Gal. II. 2.

3 But neither Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised:

But though I did not think myself obliged in sincerity to make a public declaration of all that was in my breast on that subject, yet I did not take any step that looked like giving up the liberty of my Gentile brethren: for *neither Titus who was* then *with me, being a Greek*, and still continuing in a state of uncircumcision, *was compelled* to submit to that rite[e], though so many maintained that it was absolutely necessary *to be circumcised* in order to salvation, (Acts xv. 1, 5.) *And* I was more averse to [*that*,] and rather favoured the disinclination of Titus to it, *because of the false brethren*[f] [*that were*] *artfully introduced*, not only into the church, but the ministry, upon a general apprehension of their piety, without being sufficiently informed of their principles and tempers: *who had* before *slipped in* among us at Antioch, *to spy out*, and make their ill-natured remarks upon *our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus* with regard to these things, *that* by imposing on the church there, which consisted chiefly of Gentile converts, *they might* find means to *bring us into* a servile *bondage* to the law of Moses, by urging the necessity of submitting to the grievous and painful yoke of its ceremonies: *To whom*, whatever court some thought proper to make to them, or whatever personal condescensions even I myself might sometimes yield to, (1 Cor. ix. 19, 20,)

3

4 And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty, which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:

4

5 To whom we gave place by subjection, no not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might

5

e *Neither Titus — was compelled*, &c.] This conduct of Paul with respect to Titus, in not submitting to his being *circumcised*, when it was insisted on as *necessary* to salvation, is very well consistent with what he afterwards did without constraint, to promote the *circumcision* of Timothy in different circumstances, (Acts xvi. 3,) as is shewn in the *note* on that text, Vol. VIII. sect xxxvi. *note* a, p. 139.

f *Because of the false brethren.*] I know not how far so late a writer as *Epiphanius* is to be credited in affirming (as he does, *Hær.* xxviii. that Cerinthus the heretic insisted absolutely on the Jewish observances, and having raised up several Jews into a most violent opposition against St. Peter, on his first going to the Gentiles (Acts xi. 2, 3.) contended afterwards at Antioch and Jerusalem for the necessity of *circumcision*, (Acts xv. 1, 5.

g *But*

SECT. iii.

19, 20,) *we did not* either at Antioch, or at Jerusalem, *give place by* any compliance or *subjection* to their insolent demands *for so much as an hour;* but always entered our open protest against their principles, *that the truth of the gospel might continue with you,* and you might rest assured, by all the proofs we could give, that the Christian religion was sufficient for justification and salvation, without the super-addition of the Jewish rituals.

Gal. II. 5.

might continue with you.

6 This was my conduct at Jerusalem on this grand occasion, nor was it upon the whole disapproved by those of my brethren for whom I had the greatest regard. *But* even *of those who* indeed *appeared to be* the most *considerable* and of the greatest note and eminence[g], however some would set them up above me, as having conversed with Christ here on earth, and been apostles long before me, I must needs say, that whatsoever advantage they had, or *how great soever they formerly were* as to any personal privileges, *it makes no difference as to me,* nor does at all affect my character, or set me upon this account beneath them as to my knowledge in the gospel (since *God,* who called me as well as them to the apostleship, *accepteth no man's person,* so as out of partial favour to constitute him supreme in his church, and Lord of his brethren, but employs whom he will to be apostles, and qualifies them for it in what way he pleases, as it is manifest he hath done with reference to me,) *for they who were of* greatest *note* and reputation, when I engaged in conference with them, *added nothing further to me,* nor were capable of informing me of any thing which I had

6 But of these who seemed to be somewhat (whatsoever they were it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person;) for they who seemed *to be somewhat,* in conference added nothing to me.

g *But of those who appeared to be considerable.*] The *apostle* had before declared what was his conduct with respect to the *false brethren,* and now proceeds to those who were *of real note* and reputation: and there is no such difficulty in the construction here, as that there should be a necessity of *supplying any thing* to complete the sense, or of *supposing an ellipsis* of the article οι at the beginning of the verse, which instead of removing a difficulty, would only involve the construction, which is obvious enough as it stands, if the *parenthesis* be rightly placed, so as only to include *(God accepteth no man's person)* and without any *supplement* or *transposition,* the sense of the whole verse is easy.—And as there is no doubt but οι δοκουντες *in this verse,* as well as in verse 2 and 9, is to be understoood of those who *really* were men *of note* and eminence, and does indeed refer to the *apostles* themselves (who are expresly named in ver. 9,) however it may be a *literal* translation, it carries in it to an English ear (as Mr. Locke observes,) too diminishing a sense, to render it as if St. Paul had only spoke of them as those who *seemed to be somewhat,* and who *seemed to be pillars.* I have therefore rendered it as expressive of the character of those who indeed *appeared to be considerable,* and were confessedly of the first rank, and *pillars* of the church.

h *They*

had not before fully learned by immediate revelation from Christ. *But on the contrary,* far from pretending to give me any new instructions, or to invest me with any new powers, they recognized my full title to the apostleship in all its extent; and plainly *seeing that I was intrusted with* the chief management and direction of *the gospel of the uncircumcision*, or of the mission to the Gentiles, *as Peter was* [*with that*] which was especially directed to those *of the circumcision; (For* indeed it was very apparent, that *he who wrought* so *effectually in Peter*, to qualify him *for the apostleship of the circumcision*, *wrought effectually also* by the same miraculous powers and endowments *in me*, to fit me *for* my mission to *the Gentiles;)* My worthy associates in this high office seeing this, *and knowing the grace that was given to me*, and how remarkably I was furnished for the great work in which I was engaged by the extraordinary favour I had received from Christ, *James, and Cephas and John, who appeared to be*, and were indeed, the *pillars* of the church, on which that at Jerusalem especially rested, as the great ornament and support of it under Christ, and on whose pious labours and wise conduct so much of the interest of the gospel in general depended, willingly *gave to me and Barnabas* my companion, *the right-hands*, in token *of* receiving us into full *fellowship* and apostleship with them; *that we* [*might go*] and preach, as we had done before, *to the Gentiles*, wherever it should please the great Head of the church to direct us, *and* that *they* for the present would continue their endeavours *to* promote Christianity among those of *the circumcision*[h], till the whole harvest of the Jews in those parts should be gathered in: *Only* [*they proposed*] *that we should be mindful of the poor* Christians in Judea, so as to make collections in their favour, as we proceeded in our progress through the Gentile churches; *which very thing I also* of my own accord *was forward to do* with all the diligence I could from the

SECT. iii.

Gal. II. 7.

7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as *the gospel* of the circumcision was unto Peter;

8 (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me towards the Gentiles:)

9 And when James, Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we *should* go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

10 Only *they would* that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.

h *They* for the present would continue, &c.] I express it with this *caution*, because there is no reason to believe that the labours of Peter, James, and John were *entirely* appropriated to those of the *circumcision;* as, on the other hand, we are assured that those of the apostle Paul were not confined to the uncircumcised Gentiles; for we often find him preaching to the Jews, and indeed, wherever he came, he proposed the gospel in the first place to them.

SECT. iii.

the sincere affection I had for them, and the concern I had for their encouragement and support under the frequent sufferings they endured from their oppressive and rapacious enemies.

IMPROVEMENT.

WARM and eager as the temper of *St. Paul* naturally was, it must certainly give us great pleasure to observe in how prudent and steady a manner he conducted himself when once engaged in the sacred work of the *Christian ministry* and *apostleship.*

Ver. 3—5 With what integrity and resolution did he behave on the one hand, that he *would not give place for an hour* to the *false brethren,* who had *slipped in* among his converts *to spy out* and subvert *their liberty?* And on the other, with what caution, that he

2 might not *frustrate* the purposes of his own ministry, by carrying that which was in general the cause of truth, of liberty, and justice, to an excess? *Thus* also let us act, *holding the truth in love* and in prudence, and labouring to do all the good we can with as little offence as possible.

While we are contending for the *liberty* of *Christians,* against the *imposition* of things which at best are *indifferent,* we may possibly be obliged to dispute the point with some who are *persons*

6 *of worth* and eminence; but *God accepteth no man's person.* We may give them *all the honour* that is due to their wisdom, their piety, and their station, without yielding up what ought to be dearer to us than any human approbation or friendship, *the dictates of our conscience* as in the sight of God.

Persons of true steadiness and candor, such as deserve to be

7—9 esteemed *pillars of the church,* will not suffer themselves to be so borne down by popular prejudices as to *disown their brethren,* whom God hath honoured with the *ministry* as well as themselves, because they exercise it in some *diversity of forms;* but will be willing (so far as they can) to give them *the right-hand of fellowship,* and will perhaps wish to be able to do it more entirely and openly than some *human constitutions* will admit.

In this however may we all agree, after the example of this blessed *apostle,* ever to do what we can to promote *mutual charity*

10 among different denominations of *Christians;* to be expressed by a readiness to *bear one another's burdens,* and to afford *liberal relief* as Providence gives opportunity. And we shall find, that as a *disunion of hearts* adds weight to the least cause of division, so fervent and unfeigned *love* will by mutual condescension and indulgence heal the breach, or happily prevent its most fatal consequences.

SECT.

SECT. IV.

The Apostle gives an account of his opposing Peter publicly at Antioch, and standing up in defence of the liberty of the church from Jewish impositions. Gal. II. 11, *to the end.*

GAL. II. 11.
BUT when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

GALATIANS II. 11.

SECT. iv. Gal. II. 11.

I HAVE been telling you how entirely I agreed with the chief apostles of the circumcision, in the interview which I had with them at Jerusalem, when that decree was made in favour of the converted Gentiles, by which they were declared free from any obligation to observe the rituals of the Mosaic law. *But when Peter was come to Antioch*[a], after Barnabas and I were returned thither (Acts xv. 30), *I opposed him to the face, because* indeed *he was* so far left to his own spirit, as to behave in such a manner, that he very much deserved *to be blamed.*

12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew, and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.

12 *For before some* Jewish zealots, who were strict in the observation of those rituals, *came from* the apostle *James* who was then at Jerusalem, *he did* upon all occasions *eat* and converse freely *with the Gentiles* there, who had embraced the gospel and had not submitted to circumcision; *but when they were come, he withdrew* from that freedom of converse, *and separated himself* from them, as if he had thought them unclean, though the Lord had so expressly taught him the contrary (see Acts x. 28); and this he did, not from any change in his sentiments and apprehension of things, but purely as *fearing them of the circumcision,* and being unwilling to displease them, thinking their censures of much greater importance than they really were.

13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch

13 *And* I thought it the more necessary to take public notice of it, as *the other* converted *Jews,* who had before used the like freedom, *dissembled* their true sentiments *also,* by a weak conformity

a *When Peter was come to Antioch.*] It is a just remark of Mons. *Saurin* (*Serm.* Vol. XI. p. 49,) that *Father Harduin* seems to have been solicitous to increase the number of his *chimeras* as much as possible [and more I never met with in any learned *author* than in him] by adopting the *pious frauds* of some of the *ancients,* who, to defend themselves from Porphyry's objection against Christianity from this error in the conduct of Peter, denied it to be *Peter the apostle* who was here spoken of, and interpreted it of another Cephas, whom they pretended to be one of *the Seventy:* an hypothesis as unnecessary as it is improbable. See *Hard. Diss. in loc.*

SECT. iv.

formity *with him* in this scrupulous avoiding their brethren; *so that even Barnabas* too, though so honest and worthy a man, and one of the messengers who had passed with me between Antioch and Jerusalem, and been acknowledged there as an apostle of the Gentiles, *was* himself in some measure *carried away with their dissimulation;* which could not but give great grief and offence to the Gentile Christians, who had been so particularly committed to his care as well as mine. *But when I saw that they did not* in this affair *walk uprightly, according to the truth* and design *of the gospel,* which indeed taught the contrary, *I said to Peter in the presence of* [*them*] *all*[b], when a numerous assembly was met together.

Gal. II. 13.

much that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.

14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before *them* all,—.

I must speak to thee, Peter, with the freedom of a Christian brother and fellow-apostle, on a particular of thy conduct which hath given public offence: let me then ask thee, *If thou, being a Jew,* and having been brought by circumcision under the strongest engagements to fulfil the whole law, *livest* frequently (as we have many of us seen) *after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews,* making no scruple to converse freely with the Gentiles without conforming to the ceremonial customs of the Jews; *why dost thou* now, by a change in thy conduct, as it were *compel the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?* Is it not at least as lawful for them to neglect the Jewish observances as it was for thee to do it but a few days ago? *We* [*who are*] *by nature,* that is, by birth and education, *Jews,* and so entitled to many peculiar privileges[c], *and* who are *not* unclean, profligate, and abandoned

—If thou being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

15 We *who* are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,

b *I said to Peter in the presence of* [*them*] *all.*] Had this been matter only of *private offence,* to be sure Paul would have known that duty required him to expostulate with Peter *privately* upon it before he had brought it before such an *assembly;* but as it was a *public affair,* in which great numbers were so sensibly affected, *this* method was most proper. Probably this happened *after public worship;* and it would seem the less surprising, considering the *conferences* which used to be held in the *Jewish synagogues* before the *assembly* was broke up; of which many instances still occur to those excellent persons in Germany and the neighbouring regions, who are engaged in a *mission* to the Jews, which may Divine grace succeed!—It is a very just observation of Mr. Jeffery here, that had any *imposture* been carried on, the contention of these two great *managers* would probably have been an occasion of discovering it.—That no *objection* against the authority of Peter, as an apostle and inspired writer, can be derived from this *dispute,* will follow on the principles laid down in our *essay on inspiration* Vol. VIII. See also *note* f, on Acts xv. 7, Vol. VIII. p. 124.

c *We who are by nature Jews,* &c.] Mr. L'Enfant thinks Paul speaks of *himself* in the *plural number,* and rests the matter on his own practice: but to me it appears evident he meant to include the *Jewish*

abandoned *sinners of the Gentiles* that walk in idolatry and all kinds of wickedness; We, I say, *knowing* in our own hearts, and having been effectually convinced, *that a man is not justified by the works of the* Mosaic *law, but* only *by the faith of Jesus Christ*, and cannot be accepted in the sight of God but by cordially and truly believing in him; *even we* ourselves have taken refuge here, and, giving up all confidence in the law for justification, *have believed in Jesus Christ* to this great purpose, *that we might* thus *be justified*, as I said before, *by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law:* this is the method we that are Jews have taken, as being thoroughly made sensible that it was absolutely necessary we should do so; *wherefore* it must be evident that *no flesh* living, whether he be Jew or Gentile, *shall* or can *be justified by the works of* the *law*, since none is capable of fully answering its demands, or can pretend to have paid an universal and unerring obedience to it. Judge then how absurd it would be to urge those who never were, like us, under such obligations to the law, to come under them, when we ourselves have been obliged to give up our expectations from hence, and to have recourse to something so much higher and nobler. *But*, after all, *if seeking to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners*, if we are still in an unpardoned state under the guilt and power of sin, and notwithstanding all that Christ has done, his gospel and grace be not sufficient to justify us, unless there be something superadded to it by the law of Moses, *what* [*is*] *Christ then the minister of sin*, and not of justification? Must it not follow that he is so, if he hath introduced an imperfect dispensation, which will not sufficiently ensure the happiness of those that follow it? Yea, doth he not indeed teach sin, if justification cannot be obtained without the law, in teaching men to renounce all dependance upon it, as it is certain by his gospel he doth? But *God forbid* that any thing should ever be insinuated so much to the dishonour of God and of our glorious Redeemer.

SECT. iv.

Gal. II. 16.

16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

17 But if while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners; *is* therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. 17

Thus

Jewish believers in general, and to argue from the *virtual confession* they had *all* made of the insufficiency of their own obedience to the *law*, if considered as a ground of *justification*.

SECT. iv.

Gal. II. 18.

Thus I addressed myself to Peter on this public occasion, and shewed that the observance of the ceremonial law was not to be imposed on Christians. *Now if I build again the things which I* then *destroyed*, and insist (as some would charge me) on the necessity of the works of the law for justification, I in effect condemn what I then did, and, setting up the very principles which I opposed, *I acknowledge myself* to have been *a transgressor* in attempting to pull them down[d]: but I am so far from acting such an inconsistent part, that I declare myself entirely in the same sentiments which I then publicly professed. *For* though I was once so zealous a bigot for the rights of the law, yet now, upon the whole, *I through the law am dead to the law*; the more I consider its nature and tenor, the more I am convinced that it is absolutely impossible that I or any man living should be justified by it, and therefore I give up all such expectations: and yet the effect of it is, not my being a lawless licentious creature, but quite the contrary; it is, *that I might live to God* in a state of favour and acceptance with him, animated by nobler views and hopes than the law could give, and therefore engaged to a more generous, sublime, and extensive obedience than it was capable of producing. For *I am crucified with Christ*, and have such a sense of his dying love upon my heart, and of the excellency of that method of justification and salvation which he hath accomplished on the cross, that I am in consequence of it dead to all the allurements of the world, and to all views of obtaining righteousness and life by the law; *nevertheless, I live* a new and spiritual life, in a conformity to the will of God, and feel the comforts of it in my heart; *yet*, to speak properly, it is *not I* that live, not I my former or my present self.

18 For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

19 For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

20 I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the

d *I acknowledge myself a transgressor.*] Mr. L'Enfant seems to consider *this verse* as a continuation of Paul's *speech* at Antioch. He would render and connect it thus; "On the contrary, so far are we from being *made sinners* by neglecting *justification* by the *law*, that, if we taught the necessity of its works, we should *become transgressors* in building again the things that we have destroyed." But if this interpretation was to be admitted, we should not only find it hard to clear up the argument, but must, I think, suppose the *following verses* likewise a part of the *speech to Peter*; which would make them much less pertinent and natural than if we suppose them the overflowings of Paul's devout heart in addressing the Galatians.—His *speech to Peter* rather seems to have gone no farther than the *foregoing verse*; and γαρ is often used with such a latitude that we may take it in the beginning of *this verse* to signify *Now*, and so consider Paul as shewing here, that whatsoever some insinuated to his prejudice, there was no inconsistency in his doctrine and practice with what he had then so openly declared.

the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

self, by any strength or power of my own, *but* it is *Christ* that by the energy of his word and Spirit *liveth in me*, and continually influences and quickens my soul to every good action and affection: *and the life which I now live in the flesh*, while surrounded with the snares and sorrows of mortality, *I live in the* continual exercise of that *faith which* [*is*] established in and centered upon the perfect righteousness *of the Son of God*; on whom alone it is that I depend for justification, and am daily deriving new influences from him, by realizing and affectionate views of that gracious and condescending Saviour, *who loved me, and* that to such an astonishing degree, that he *delivered himself up* to torments and death *for me*, that he might procure my redemption and salvation. SECT. iv. Gal. II. 20.

21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness *come* by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

So that you see upon the whole, when you consider all the tenor of my conduct, as well as my conference with Peter at Antioch, that *I do not*, like many others, *frustrate the grace of God* in Christ, and render void that method of salvation which the gospel hath revealed, which a behaviour like that which I reproved, if pursued into all its consequences, must appear to do: *for if righteousness* [*come*] *by the law*, and that made a sufficient provision for our being justified and accepted in the sight of God, *then* there was no necessity of the grace of God in giving his Son for us, and *Christ is dead in vain*, since he died to redeem us from the curse of the law, as being utterly hopeless and irrecoverable by that dispensation alone. 21

IMPROVEMENT.

It is a most generous and worthy Spirit that was shewn by the apostle *Paul* on this occasion, in his being so ready to stand up for *Christian liberty*, and to reprove even *Peter* himself, though so honoured and beloved a brother, when he acted a cowardly and inconsistent part. He did not meanly censure him to others, and endeavour by *private* insinuations to lessen his character; but by his *openly rebuking him* he shewed himself a sincere friend, and took the most effectual method to prevent the ill consequences of his *dissimulation*, and at the same time to *recover his brother* to a more worthy and consistent conduct. Ver. 11 14

How little there is in all this passage that looks like any *peculiar* 12 *& seq.*

SECT. iv.

liar authority assumed on the part of *St. Peter*, or acknowledged by *St. Paul*, every unprejudiced reader will easily observe: and perhaps God might suffer this great *apostle of the circumcision* thus to fall, and to be thus corrected by the *apostle of the Gentiles*, the more effectually to discountenance those arrogant and groundless claims of the pretended *successors of St. Peter* to supremacy and infallibility, which have introduced so much confusion and infamy into the church.

Ver.

We may well rejoice in the review of a passage which so strongly asserts *Christian liberty* on the one hand, and exemplifies the very life of *Christian grace* on the other. Let it ever be retained
16 in our memories, that we are *justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law;* and may our conduct be agreeable to the doctrine we profess, giving up all expectations inconsistent
17 with this decision, yet ever remembering that *Christ is not the minister of sin.* Let faith in him engage us, whilst *dead to the law* as
19 a covenant of works, to be observant of it as a rule of life, and so to *live to God* as those who are still *under a law to Christ* (1 Cor. ix. 21); and, animated by the influences of his grace, may our souls feel more and more of the efficacy of his death, *who loved us and gave himself for us.*

20 Strongly indeed will the affecting consideration of the *death of Christ* impress our hearts; when we are conscious of our interest and concern in it. May the impression last through life; and may we remember that we are not merely to make *one solemn address* to our adorable *Redeemer*, committing by an act of faith our souls into his hands; but that our faith is *daily* to be renewing its views of him, that so *the life which we now live in the flesh*, in the midst of so many vanities and dangers, may be conducted by the continual influence of this principle. May we therefore *daily* regard him as our Instructor and Governor, our Atonement and Intercessor, our Example and Strength, our Guardian
21 and Forerunner: and, in proportion to the degree in which *such views* as these prevail, *the grace of God*, instead of being *frustrated*, will be the more admired and esteemed; and as it was impossible that *righteousness* should be attainable *by the law*, it will appear *Christ hath not died in vain*, but that his death was *necessary* to procure our *justification*, and is the only sure foundation of our faith and hope.

SECT.

SECT. V.

The Apostle reproves the Galatians for their instability with regard to the important doctrine of justification by faith; which he farther confirms from the instance of Abraham, who was thus justified, and in whose blessing we share, through the redemption Christ has wrought out for us. Gal. III. 1—14.

Gal. III. 1.
O FOOLISH Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified among you?

Galatians III. 1.

THESE are the real sentiments of my heart which I have now laid before you, and you were formerly taught them at large. But *O* ye *thoughtless Galatians,* after all the instructions I have given you, how little do they prevail in your breasts? May I not even ask you, *who hath* by some fallacious fatal charm *enchanted you* [a], and as it were dazzled the eyes of your mind with the vain glitterings of sophistry and delusive arts of evasion, *that you should not* go on to *obey the truth* so solemnly inculcated upon you; even you, *before whose eyes Jesus Christ crucified hath been* so *evidently set forth* and strongly delineated *among you* [b], in the most affectionate representations of his word and ordinances? One would have imagined these lively views should for ever have secured your fidelity to him and have fortified your hearts against every insinuation injurious to the honour of his cross. But methinks even now the matter might be brought to a short issue: and to this purpose, there is *this only I would learn of you, Did ye receive the Spirit* in its extraordinary operations in and upon you, *by* a regard to *the works of the* Mosaic *law,* or any other law on which you might depend for justification as a matter of legal claim? *or* were you made partakers of it *by the hearing of* the gospel, proposing the method of

SECT. V. Gal. III. 1.

2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

a *Who hath enchanted you?*] I know some would render ἐβάσκανε, *Who hath envied your happiness?* But as the Jewish zealots could not have any sense of the happiness of those christians they endeavoured to disturb, it is not, I think, so natural to refer their attempts to envy; and it is well known the word also signifies to *enchant.* It strongly expresses the *unreasonable turn* their minds had taken, so that one would imagine they had been deprived of the *regular use* even of their natural faculties.

b *Before whose eyes Jesus Christ crucified,* &c.] There is no room to *object* that this is merely an *argument to the passions;* for in proportion to the affecting sense they had of the love of Christ in submitting to *crucifixion* for them, would be the *rational sense* of the obligations they were under to him, to preserve his gospel pure, and his church free and happy.

c *Did*

SECT. V.

of justification by *faith* in the righteousness and grace of the Redeemer [c]? If any of the new teachers that are come among you can work such miracles in proof of their tenets, and confer such gifts on their followers, you will be more excusable in hearkening to them than in present circumstances you can possibly be.

Gal. III. 2.

3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

3 But *are you* indeed *so inconsiderate* as to need being reminded in this manner? Where is the benefit you can propose by turning to the law? *Having begun in the Spirit*, having known the spirituality, power, and energy of the glorious gospel, *are ye now* seeking to be *made perfect by the flesh?* or have you any expectation of attaining to a superior degree of perfection and excellency, by a submission to those carnal ordinances of the law which at first view appear to be so much beneath it, and to be altogether insufficient for it? If you are tempted to so great a fall as this, let me remind you of the difficulties you have already borne for Christianity; many of which have been brought upon you by the instigation of the Jews, whose hatred is so violent against it. Say then, my brethren, *have ye suffered so many things in vain* [d]? Will you give up the benefit of all these sufferings, and lose in a great measure at least, the reward of them, by relinquishing what is so material in that scheme of doctrine you have been suffering for? Shall all that you have endured be thus in vain? *if* indeed [*it be*] *yet in vain*, which I am willing

4 Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if *it be* yet in vain,

c *Did ye receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*] There is no doubt but that it was on their becoming Christians that they *received the Spirit*; and therefore that it could not be ascribed to *the law*, which they were strangers to till afterwards, but must be owing to that *faith* in which they were instructed by the *gospel* on their embracing Christianity. Nor can it justly be *objected* that they still retained the Christianity by which *the Spirit* was received; for they were now perverted to a different system by their *new teachers*, and that which Paul had preached at first among them, when they received the Spirit, was a Christianity of which Judaism made no part.

d *Have ye suffered so many things in vain?*] Should it be said, "that, notwithstanding the Galatians were for adding the observation of the *law* to the *gospel*, it would not *necessarily* destroy their hopes as Christians, nor deprive them of the reward of that *courage* they had hitherto shewn in its defence:" yet it must be allowed that *some degree* of their reward might be lost, as it might derogate from their future glory, to have been through inconsideration, and prejudices rashly admitted, *accessary* to the corruption and consequent obstruction of the gospel: and also, that as much *persecution* might be declined by admitting this mixture of Judaism, there was reason to fear that it was a regard to their own present ease and convenience that led them to it, (compare chap. v. 11, and vi. 12;) which was in a manner cancelling the good effect of their former resolution; and indeed any thing that looked like *a sinful temporizing* in those who had before been *confessors for the truth*, might occasion peculiar scandal, and endanger many more.

e *Worketh.*

willing to hope it is not entirely, and that however your principles may have been shaken, yet God will not permit them to be quite overthrown. SECT. V. Gal. III. 4.

5 He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, *doeth he it* by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

I know that your favourite teachers have many arts of address with which they endeavour to soothe you, and to conciliate your regards to themselves, while they would alienate them from me: but when you come to the most solid and authentic proofs of a Divine mission, have you not seen them wrought among you, in confirmation of the doctrine I delivered to you? *He therefore that ministereth to you* an extraordinary supply of *the Spirit* by the laying on of his hands *and* that *worketh* other evident and uncontrouled *miracles among you*[e] [*doeth he it*] *by the works of the law*, and in virtue of any commission he had received from God to inculcate the observation of the Mosaic precepts? *or* is it *by the hearing of faith* that he doeth it? Is it not evidently by that gospel which you have heard me preach, and which exhorts you to seek justification and salvation by faith? And will you then forsake a doctrine which has been so signally attested, and exchange it for one, the teachers of which have no such attestations to produce? 5

6 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

And this method which the gospel proposeth is agreeable to the example which you have in the great father of the faithful; for *even as* you read of *Abraham*, (Gen. xv. 6.) long before he was circumcised, "that he *believed God*, relying on the promise that he made him, *and it was imputed to him for righteousness*;" it was set down to his account, as an evidence of his being a righteous person: 6

7 Know ye therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.

Know ye therefore, and infer from hence, *that* as faith was the brightest part of the character of this illustrious patriarch, so all *they who* [*are*] *of faith*, all that have the same principle working in their hearts, and engaging them to receive the gospel-dispensation, *the same are*, and shew themselves by a like disposition to be, *the children of Abraham*, 7

and

e *Worketh miracles among you.*] It is a just and important observation of Mr. Baxter here, that it was a great display of Divine Wisdom to suffer such *contentions* to arise thus *early* in the church as should make it necessary for the *apostles* to appeal to the *miracles* wrought *before*, and *upon* those who were afterwards in some degree alienated from them; that future ages might be convinced of the *certainty* of these *miracles* as matters of fact beyond all possibility of contradiction. See *Baxter's Practical Works*, Vol. II. p. 118.

f *In*

SECT. V.

and may expect to inherit the same blessings with him, as by embracing the gospel they manifest the same principle and temper.

Gal. III. 8. *And* again, the Holy Spirit, by whose inspiration *the scripture* was written, *foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles*, when he should call them by his grace, in the same manner as he justified Abraham, only *through faith, did* in effect *before* the revelation of it to the world *preach* the glad tidings of *the gospel unto Abraham* himself, [*saying*] once and again, Gen. xii. 3; xviii. 18; xxii. 18. "*In thee shall all nations* of the earth *be blessed*[f];" that is to say, By their faith in that glorious Person who is to descend from thee, all persons whatsoever shall be blessed, of whatever nation they be, who learn to resemble thee in their readiness to receive every message from God with an entire

9 submission and obedience. *So then* it appears, that *they who are* really partakers of the grace *of faith*, and seek to be justified by it; they who have an unfeigned principle of faith in their hearts, and shew it by giving due credit to this great and indubitable testimony which God hath borne to his Son; they *are blessed with believing Abraham*, and shall inherit the promises made to him, though they are, as he was when he first received these promises, in a state of uncircumcision.

10 Now it is evident that this blessing must be received by the gospel; *for as many as are of* that covenant, which relates only to *the works of the law*, and have no higher views and expectations than a legal dispensation could give, *are* indeed *under a curse*[g], and by every breach of that law become obnoxious to it. And of this, with respect to the Mosaic law, we have as express a proof as can be imagined; *for it is written*

8 And the scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, *saying*, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

9 So then they which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham.

10 For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse: for it is written,

[f] *In thee shall all nations* of the earth *be blessed.*] It may perhaps be asked, "What evidence there is that *this promise* meant the converting Jews and Gentiles to Christianity, rather than converting the Gentiles to Judaism, and so blessing them with a participation of the *privileges* originally granted to the natural seed of Abraham?" But besides what the *apostle* afterwards says for clearing up this point, it may be answered, That the Mosaic œconomy was so constituted that it could never be an *universal* thing; and that when it was considered what sort of a person Christ in fact was, there would appear reason to believe that *this promise* referred to him, even separate from the authority of the *apostle* in asserting it, and how dubious soever the sense of the oracle might appear till it was illustrated by the *event*.

[g] *Are under a curse.*] Dr. Whitby proves (in his note on verse 13), that the *law* of Adam was attended with *a curse* as well as that of Moses; and that it is *the more general curse* which is here intended, as illustrated by what Moses expressed as the sanction of his institutions.

h *The*

ten, Cursed *is* every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.

written, with regard to all that are under it (Deut. xxvii. 26,) "*Cursed* [*is*] *every one who* "confirmeth not all the words of this law, that is, who *continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.*" It is therefore a perfect, personal, and perpetual obedience to every one of its injunctions, which the law requires: and as every man's conscience must tell him that he hath not performed this, he must see the dreadful denunciation levelled at himself, and dooming him to death and misery.

SECT. V.

Gal. III. 10.

11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, *it is* evident: for, The just shall live by faith.

11 *And that no man is justified in the sight of God by* the performance of *the law*, or by his own obedience to it, [*is*] farther *evident* from God's appointment of another way of justification; *for* (as the prophet saith, Habak. ii. 4), "*The just*, or righteous man, that is, he who shall finally be treated by God as such, *shall live by faith*[h]:" he shall be justified and saved by trusting in the mercy of an almighty God through Christ, and resting on the promise he hath graciously made of pardon and salvation even to sinful creatures, who shall by faith apply to him for righteousness and life.

12 And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them, shall live in them.

12 *Now* it is manifest that *the law is not of faith*, nor doth it allow of such a way of justification; *but* puts it on another and most rigorous footing, insisting on exact obedience to all its commands, and declaring (Lev. xviii. 5), "that *the man that doeth them, shall live in* or by *them*:" he who perfectly conforms himself to these precepts shall have a right to happiness in consequence of them; but he that breaks them must bear the penalty without any farther assistance from a law which, being in one instance violated, must for ever condemn the transgressor.

13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made

13 But ever adored be the riches of Divine grace, *Christ hath redeemed us* who believe in his name *from the* terrible *curse of the law*[i], and bought us

h *The just shall live by faith.*] As the *apostle* shews in the *next verse* that there was no obtaining life by the *law* without a perfect personal obedience, *faith*, which stands here in opposition to it, must signify a firm belief of the promise of God, and acting according to it in a dependance upon Christ for righteousness; which is the way of *justification* that the *gospel* has revealed. Compare note d, on Rom. i. 17, Vol. VIII. p. 387.

i *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law.*] The *curse of the law* from which Christ has redeemed us was that which doomed us to *eternal misery*; from whence it hath been very plausibly *inferred* that the *law of Moses* was established on the sanction of *future punishments*. But perhaps it may be solidly answered, that the *apostle*, arguing concerning the *law of God in general*, the breach of which did certainly render obnoxious to *future punishments*

SECT. V.

us off from that servitude and misery to which it inexorably doomed us, by *being* himself *made a curse for us*, and enduring the penalty which our sins had deserved: for such was the death which he bore in our stead; not only when considered as a capital punishment, which universally implies something of this, but as thus stigmatized by the express declaration of the law against every one in such a particular circumstance; *for it is written* (Deut. xxi. 23), "*Cursed* [*is*] *every one that hangeth on a tree:*" now Christ, as you well know, was hung upon a tree; he expired on the cross, and his dead body hung for some time upon it. And this, in his adorable condescension, he submitted to for us and our salvation; *that* the curse having been borne by him in our room, *the blessing of Abraham* in all its extent of spiritual benefits, and that adoption which was given in him, *might come*, not only on believing Jews, but *on the Gentiles* also, *through Christ Jesus* the great anointed Saviour; and particularly, *that we*, even the whole church of Christian converts, *might*, *through* the exercise of a living and sincere *faith* in him, *receive the promise of the Spirit* as the seal of our adoption [k], both in the effusion of its miraculous gifts, so far as they may conduce to the edification of the church, and in the rich abundance of its saving graces.

Gal. III. 13.

made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree.

14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith;

14

IMPROVEMENT.

THROUGH the amazing goodness of God to us we share with the *Galatians* in this great privilege, that *Jesus Christ crucified*

ments, may mention the circumstance of the *Mosaic law* leaving every presumptuous offender to die *under a curse*, as an intimation of those melancholy prospects with respect to *futurity* which we must grant it certainly gave, even though we should not suppose that it contained an *express* threatening of *such punishments*; which I do not see that it any where does, and which I think the learned Mr. Warburton has fully proved that it doth not. And it is evident that the course of the *apostle's* argument here implies, that *all* true believers *are redeemed from the curse*; and consequently, that he speaks of a *curse*, to which *all*, as *sinners*, were liable; whereas the Gentiles being under no obligation to the *Mosaic law* at all, could not possibly be *directly* effected by *its curse*, nor could indeed be *at all* affected by it, otherwise than in the latitude in which we have explained this passage.

k *That we might receive the promise of the Spirit.*] It is justly observed by the learned Diodate here, that the plentiful effusion of the *Holy Spirit* of God had been so frequently promised by the *prophets* as the great blessing of the latter day, that it is here used as *synonymous* to the *blessing of Abraham*. And Mr. *Howe* very properly argues from hence the great importance of the *Spirit*, since the imparting it is represented as *the great blessing* by which the curse is removed; from whence (says he) it follows that the withdrawing and withholding it is *the great calamity* which falls upon men by their apostacy from God. See *Howe's Works*, Vol. I. p. 237.

fied is *evidently set forth among us.* Let us make the object familiar to our view, to our hearts: and O that we may all feel its powerful influence to engage us to *obey the truth*, and to comply with the practical design of the gospel! O that none of the *enchantments* of this vain world may be able to draw us aside from a becoming regard to it! May those especially, who *have begun in the Spirit*, and perhaps have *suffered* many difficulties already in the cause of religion, be concerned that they may not *suffer so many things in vain*, and after all their pretensions and hopes *make an end in the flesh*, by forsaking that excellent cause!

SECT. V.

Ver. 1, 3, 4

That we may be deemed the *children of Abraham*, let us have the same *faith* with him; that *believing in God* as he did, and trusting in the promised *Messiah*, we may attain that *righteousness* which it is impossible to obtain *by the deeds of the law*, which insists upon perfect obedience, and passes sentence upon every one that has transgressed it. Nothing can be more important than to endeavour to impress our souls with this great and fundamental truth, that *if we are of the works of the law*, and trust in these for justification, *we are under a curse.* O that God may graciously thunder *that curse* in the ears of sleeping sinners, and make them sensible of their guilt and danger; that as *prisoners of justice*, yet in some measure *prisoners of hope* (Zech. ix. 12), they may *flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them* in the gospel (Heb. vi. 18).

6, 7, 10

We need not go far for help. No sooner are we wounded (as it were) in *one* verse, than we find provision for our healing in *another.* For *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law;* and this in a method never sufficiently to be admired, even by *making himself a ransom*, yea and becoming *a curse for us;* submitting, not only to great infamy and wretchedness in his life, but to an ignominious and accursed *death*, being *slain and hung upon a tree* (Acts v. 30; x. 39).

13

To him let us apply, that *the curse* may be removed; and with humble confidence in him, let us lift up our eyes in cheerful expectation, that though by birth we are *Gentiles*, the *blessing of Abraham* will come upon us, and that *through faith* we shall *receive the promise of the Spirit.* And *what promise* can be more valuable than this? *what blessing* more desirable, than to be enlightened, to be quickened, to be sanctified, to be comforted *by the Spirit!* As *the just*, may we *live by faith;* and make it our daily request at the *throne of grace*, that God will implant and increase that Divine principle in our hearts, even such *a faith* as shall *work by love*, and prove a genuine principle of sincere and universal obedience.

14

11

SECT.

SECT. VI.

The Apostle farther illustrates the stability and importance of the covenant made with Abraham as the father of believers, which the Mosaic covenant could not infringe, and to an application to which its greatest severities were intended to lead. Gal. III. 15. *to the end.*

SECT. VI.

Gal. III. 15.

GALATIANS III. 15.

GAL. III. 15.

BRETHREN, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth or addeth thereto.

I HAVE been speaking, *brethren*, of the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant, and have shewn that, according to the original tenor of it, all his believing seed, whether they be or be not circumcised, must be entitled to many very valuable privileges. And herein *I speak after the manner of men*, and reason on the principles of common equity, according to what is the allowed rule of all human compacts; for *though it be but the covenant of a man* with his fellow-creature, *yet if it be* once legally *confirmed* by mutual promise and seal, *no* honest *man* concerned afterwards *cancelleth* what was agreed to by it, *or addeth* any thing *to it* which should alter the terms of it, without the consent of the other stipulating party.

16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many: but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

16 *Now*, to apply this to the case before us, *the promises* relating to the justification of believers *were spoken* by God at first *to Abraham, and to his seed*, who are expressly mentioned as making a party with him in the covenant. And here by the way you will observe, that *he saith not* "*And to seeds*," in the plural number, *as* speaking *of many: but* in the singular number, *as of one*, "*And to thy seed*;" not extending it to a variety of seeds, which might descend from him, but limiting what he says to one[a], *which is* all to

a *He saith not, "And to seeds," as of many;* &c] One would not easily allow that the *apostle* founds his *argument* on a presumption, that *seed* cannot signify a *plurality* of persons; since (not to mention a thousand other texts), in that very *covenant with Abraham* to which he refers, God said, Gen. xv. 5, *So shall thy seed be:* that is, It shall be as numerous *as the stars of heaven.* Nor can any instance be produced in which the greatest number of persons to descend from any one are called *his seeds.* Therefore, with Bishop *Burnet* (in his *Four Discourses*, p. 66), I take it to be only the *apostle's* saying, in *bad Greek* I confess, but with good sense and reason, that the *promises* made to Abraham are *not only* appropriated to *one* line of his descendants, that is, to those by Isaac; but centre in *one* illustrious *person*, with regard to whom the rest are made partakers of the great blessing exhibited in the *Abrahamic covenant.* And this interpretation I greatly prefer to theirs who suppose

to center in *Christ*; out of regard to whom that branch of Abraham's family from which he was to spring was in so remarkable a manner separated from the rest. SECT. VI.

Gal. III. 16.

17 And this I say, *that* the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

And this I say further, on the principles laid down above, [*that*] *the covenant which was* long *before confirmed by* the promise of *God with respect to Christ*, as the illustrious Seed referred to, and the great universal blessing exhibited in the promise, *the law which was* given at mount Sinai *four hundred and thirty years after* the date of it[b] *cannot disannul*, [*so*] *that it should make the promise* void and *ineffectual*; which it must have done if the observation of that law had been for the future, the necessary means of justification and happiness. 17

18 For if the inheritance *be* of the law, *it is* no more of promise: but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise.

For if the inheritance of Abraham's blessing [*be*] suspended on such a condition as not to be obtained but by the observation *of the law*, it must then follow that [*it is*] *no more* the effect *of the promise*, which is indeed quite abrogated by such a clog: *but* it is evident that *God* freely *gave* [*it to*] *Abraham by promise*; and therefore it must be left in such a state as that the honour of the promise may be secure, which otherwise would be abolished and disgraced (Rom. iv. 13, 14). 18

19 Wherefore then *serveth* the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should

But it may be objected, If justification and eternal life cannot be obtained by this means, *to what purpose then* [*serveth*] *the law*, or what significancy hath it? I answer, That *it was added* after the promise was made, *because of transgressions*[c]; that the Jews might either be preserved 19

suppose that Christ here signifies the *mystical body of Christ*, or the *aggregate of all believers*; which interpretation will no more afford an argument from these words than the preceding. And if we suppose it merely a remark by way of *illustration*, I think no sense so easy as this which is favoured by ver. 19.

b *Four hundred and thirty years after.*] To make out this computation, Dr. *Whitby* and several other *commentators* proceed thus. The first celebrated *promise* was made to Abraham when he was *seventy-five* years old (Gen. xii. 3, 4); and from this date of it to the birth of Isaac, when Abraham was an *hundred* years old (Gen. xxi. 5), was 25 years: Isaac was 60 when Jacob was born (Gen. xxv. 26). Jacob went into Egypt at 130 (Gen. xlvii. 9). And the Israelites sojourned there (according to the *Septuagint*, Exod. xii. 40) 215 years, which completes the number. Compare *note* f, on Acts vii. 6, Vol. VII. p. 574.

c *It was added because of transgressions.*] As the *law* that was given by Moses neither did, nor could *disannul the covenant* made with Abraham, to which the Jews undoubtedly had a claim, the design of *that law* must therefore have been to engage those of his descendants that came under it to see their need of *that covenant*, and more effectually to recommend *the promise* to them. And as the writings of the book of Genesis gave them a *farther* account of it than *tradition* had preserved, *the law* might be said *to be added* to that account *because of transgressions*; as their transgressions, not only of the ceremonial but of the moral precepts, would appear more exceedingly *sinful* and *dangerous*, in proportion to the perspicuity of these precepts, and the awful solemnity with which they were delivered.

d By

SECT. VI.

served from idolatry and other crimes, or that they might be convicted of their guilt in committing them, and so be taught to seek after a more effectual method of obtaining pardon, with an earnestness proportionable to the discovery it made of the malignity of their guilt: and with this view it was to continue *till the* illustrious *Seed should come*, even the Messiah, *to whom the promise was made;* into whom both Jews and Gentiles being ingrafted by faith, when the gospel-dispensation took place, should become without distinction the spiritual seed of Abraham, and be entitled to the blessings of the promise. Accordingly the law was given in a way agreeable to this design of it; [*and it was*] *ordained* and promulgated *by* the ministration of *angels* at mount Sinai[d], and put *in the hand of* Moses, who was then appointed by God to act the part of *a mediator* between him and the people of Israel[e], and was authorised to attest (as it were) their mutual and reciprocal obligations to each other; whereas the promise needed no mediator, but was immediately deposited by God in the hand of Abraham to whom it was made.

Gal. III. 19.

should come, to whom the promise was made; *and it was* ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

20 *Now* we know that *a mediator is not* merely [*the mediator*] *of one* party, but at least of two, between which he must pass, and by the nature of his office is to transact for both: *but God is* only *one* party in that covenant made with Abraham of which we have been speaking[f], and Abraham

20 Now a mediator is

d By the ministration of *angels* at mount Sinai.] That the *law* was given *by the ministration of angels*, is apparent from many passages of scripture (compare Psal. lxviii. 17; Acts vii. 53; and Heb. ii. 2); though the Logos did undoubtedly *preside* among them, and it was *in his name* that the proclamation was made by *angels*, as his heralds and attendants.

e *In the hand of a mediator.*] It is a singular notion of Mr. Pierce on Heb. vii. 22, that *the mediator* here spoken of is *the order of Jewish high-priests*, who succeeding one another, were by virtue of their office *mediators* between God and the people. He pleads, "that the *law* is here represented as left in the hands of a mediator *till the promised seed should come.*" But the clause αχρις ε ελθη το σπερμα, *till the Seed should come*, will make very good sense if it be taken in connection with the preceding word προστεθη, and referred to what is said immediately before of *the law* being *added*; as appears in the *paraphrase*. And the *apostle's* argument will be much better supported by referring this to Moses, who was particularly authorised *by the Jewish people*, as well as constituted by God, to *mediate* in the affair of receiving the *law*, which he transacted once for all.—It is so unusual and unnatural a manner of speaking, to call a *succession* of men *a mediator*, that one would not willingly be forced on such an inconvenient interpretation.

f *A mediator is not* [*the mediator*] *of one; but God is one.*] I have followed Mr. Locke's interpretation of this *difficult passage*, not without attentively comparing a variety of others. The learned Dr. *Jenkins* (in his *Remarks on four Books*, p. 136) interprets it, "*This* mediator *is not a mediator of one and the same covenant* with the former; *but God is still one and the same*, an unchangeable Being, who will therefore adhere faithfully to his prior engagements." But this changing the sense of the word *one*, and putting so unusual an interpretation upon it, is a difficulty one would choose,

is not *a mediator* of one; but God is one.

Abraham and his seed, including all that believe, both Jews and Gentiles, are the other. As Moses therefore, when the law was given, stood at that time between the Lord and Israel (Deut. v. 5), and did not pass between the whole collective body of Abraham's seed and the blessed God; so nothing was transacted by him with relation to those for whom he did not appear; and consequently nothing in that covenant wherein he did mediate could disannul the promise, or affect the right accruing to any from a prior engagement, in which the Gentiles were concerned as well as the Israelites: for no covenant can be altered but by the mutual consent of both parties; and in what was done at mount Sinai by the mediation of Moses, there was none to appear for the Gentiles; so that this transaction between God and the Israelites could have no force to abrogate the promise which extended likewise to the Gentiles, or to vacate a covenant that was made between parties of which one only was there.

SECT. vi.

Gal. III. 20.

21 *Is* the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.

And shall it now be said, [*Is*] *the law then against the promises of God?* And so far as the law takes place with regard to those who are under it, doth it not seem at least to implead in some measure, and to infringe upon that better state in which they who are brought into subjection to it, would otherwise have been? *God forbid*, that we should insinuate any thing of that kind! On the contrary, it was intended to be subservient to the promise, and the design of it in its remoter consequences, if rightly attended to and applied, was to lead the thoughts and hearts of those who are under it to an higher and better dispensation. *For if* indeed *there had been a law given, which could have given life*, if any law, considered in itself alone, could have been to sinful creatures a sufficient means of justification

21

choose, if possible, to avoid.—Nor can it be understood as if it were said, "Where *a mediator* is appointed to interpose his office, it is a sign *the parties are at variance*;" but God is now *reconciled*: for neither does it appear that there was any controversy between God and Israel when Moses was appointed *a mediator*: nor does God's *being one* properly signify *being at peace*.—I shall mention but one other explication, which makes the sense of it as if it had been said, "Moses is *not a mediator* ενος, *of the one seed*, to whom the promise was made; and therefore could not act so as to give up *his right*, or that of the persons whose guardian and representative he was." But this would suppose a very unwarrantable change in the signification of *one* when applied to God, and takes it for granted, I think very unreasonably, that Christ was not concerned in giving the *law* from mount Sinai.

g *Righteousness*

SECT. vi.

tification and eternal happiness, then *assuredly righteousness should have been by the* Mosaic *law*[g], than which there is not any law more holy, excellent, and good. *But* so far is the law from introducing any justifying righteousness, that *the scripture* in revealing it *hath* plainly *shut up all*, both Jews and Gentiles, *under sin*, as so many condemned malefactors; for it hath stated the rule of duty in such a manner, that every man's conscience must, on considering and understanding that rule, certainly charge himself with sin. And it is wisely ordered in this manner, that they who are so convinced of guilt and misery, might look beyond it to be delivered from their lost condition, and *that the promise* of righteousness and life *by faith in Jesus Christ*, as the only means of justification, *might be given* and appropriated *to them that* truly *believe* in him for pardon and salvation; and thus the seeming severity of the sentence was intended so much the more to illustrate the grace of the promise.

Gal. III. 22.

22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

23 The law then, which condemns every transgression, was designed to be preparatory for the discovery which the gospel makes of the way of being justified by faith: *but before* this *faith came* to be exhibited, as the method of acceptance with God, *we* that were under the law stood on the foot of our own obedience before him; and having become obnoxious to Divine justice, and liable to death, the punishment of sin, *were kept under* the bond of *the law*, as condemned malefactors are guarded in close custody, *shut up* as prisoners under sentence[h], *unto the faith which* in due time *should afterwards be revealed;* there being no possibility of escape, till the Messiah came, and brought the happy tidings of a way to be justified and accepted, though we were
24 before most justly condemned. *So that the law*, while it continued its authority over us, and held us under the rigour of its discipline, *was*

23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster

g *Righteousness should have been by the* Mosaic *law.*] This was *the law* by way of eminence, to which therefore God would have done that honour, if he would have done it to any.

h *Shut up* as prisoners under sentence.] The *apostle* having shewn in the *preceding verse*, that *all* were *shut up under sin*, what he now adds of the Jews being *shut up*, does not so much refer to the *fatigue* of *ceremonies* (though some have explained it so) as to the *condemnation* under which the violation of *the law* brought the transgressors of it; according to the grand argument so largely insisted upon by St. Paul in his epistle to the Romans, chap. iii. 9—23.

master *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

was as it were *our schoolmaster*, or the instructor of our childhood, to teach us our own sinfulness and the necessity of a better righteousness than our own; and so [*to lead us*] *unto Christ*, and to engage us, as condemned by the law, to have recourse to him who is the end of the law for righteousness, (Rom. x. 4.) *that we might* thus *be justified by faith* in him, and so obtain the benefit of the promise. SECT. vi. Gal. III. 24.

25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

But when this *faith* once *came* to be fully revealed by the gospel-dispensation, we then passed over to a more liberal and happy state; and being instructed in the knowledge of Christ, *we are no longer under* the discipline of *a schoolmaster* as children in a state of minority, and have no such need of the law, as we had formerly, to direct us to him. 25

26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

For having believed in Christ, as he is discovered in the gospel, *ye are all*, without distinction, Gentiles as well as Jews, *the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus*[i] and are now as it were brought into an adult state, in which you have a claim to higher privileges, and to greater freedom, than you had before. 26

27 For as many of you as ye have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.

For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, and so have taken upon you the solemn profession of his religion, may thus be said to *have put on Christ*[k], and to be clothed with his character and covered with his righteousness; and by the interest you have in him by faith, are so united to him as to appear one with him in his state of liberty and felicity. 27

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye

So that now the distinctions, which were before so much regarded, are in a manner done away, and have an end put to them, by this happy union; and *there is neither Jew nor Greek*, but the latter has the same privileges with the former, and the former may without offending God use the same freedom in approaching to him with the latter; 28

i *The sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*] It may perhaps be *objected*, "We might have been the *children* or the *sons of God*, though we had still continued under a *schoolmaster*;" but we should not then have *appeared* under the character of *such*, as the *apostle* argues in the beginning of the *next chapter*. But perhaps the particle γαρ may here signify *now*; and so it may introduce the following *application* of the premises laid down before in more general terms. It seems that παιδαγωγος here signifies such a *master or governor* as hath a power of *restraining* and *correcting* children in a manner that suits only an *infant-state*, or that of *early childhood*.

k *Have put on Christ.*] Mr. Locke here observes, that by their *putting on Christ* it is implied, "that to God, now looking on them, there appears, *nothing but Christ*: They are, as it were, covered all over with him as a man is with the clothes he has put on. And hence, in the *next verse*, it is said, they *are all one in Christ Jesus*, as if there were but that *one person*."

SECT. VI.

latter; *there is neither bond nor free*, but slaves are now the Lord's freemen, and freemen the Lord's servants; and this consideration makes the free humble, and the slave cheerful, and swallows up in a great measure the sense of his servitude; *there is neither male nor female*, but all are now admitted to that initiatory ordinance of baptism which comes in the place of circumcision that was appropriated to the males; and this happy state of equality, into which, with respect to spiritual privileges, both sexes are brought, may justly prevent that tyranny over the weaker which in some places hath so shamefully prevailed: *for ye are all one in Christ Jesus*, and are all equally accepted in him; and being made one body in him, believers, of whatever nation, or sex, or condition they be, are all cemented in the bonds of holy friendship, and animated with the views of the same happiness. *And if ye* [*be*] *Christ's*, and are by faith united to him, who is the promised Seed, in whom all nations shall be blessed, *then are ye the* true *seed of Abraham*, and equally are so, whether ye are circumcised or not; *and*, in consequence of this, ye are *heirs in virtue of the promise*, and may look upon the best blessings promised to that holy patriarch as your own, though you have no inheritance in the land of Canaan, and pretend to claim nothing by virtue of a natural descent.

Gal. III. 28.

ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

29 And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

29

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 26 LET us rejoice in those *spiritual privileges* to which *all true Christians* are now equally entitled; and charge our souls with those *obligations* which necessarily attend them. Let us look 29 upon ourselves as *the children of Abraham*, as entitled to the noblest of those *promises* which God made to that excellent saint; even to that great and comprehensive *promise* (which is *all the salvation, and all the desire*, of every true *child of Abraham*,) namely, *that God will be a God to us*, (Gen. xvii. 7, 8.) Let us approve ourselves his genuine *offspring* by imitating his *faith*; 27 and always remember that, having been *baptized into Christ*, we have so *put on Christ*, as to be obliged to *resemble him*, in his temper and character.

28 If we desire to share the blessings and glories of that *one body* of which *Christ* is the great and glorious *Head*, let us not lay a disproportionate

disproportionate stress upon any thing by which one *Christian* may be distinguished from another; but endeavour, as *one in Christ Jesus, to be one* in affection and friendship to each other; and let those who seem to have the greatest advantages condescend to them that seem most their inferiors. SECT. VI. Ver. 28

Giving up all expectations of *life* from any *law*, since that of *Moses* could not give it, let us look for *glory, honour, and immortality by the gospel;* and be very thankful for the knowledge we have of *the Mediator of a better covenant* than that in which *Moses* was appointed to *mediate.* And as *the law* was given, *not to disannul the covenant of promise*, but with a view to be subservient to it, and to point out *Christ*, let us apply to him for *righteousness and life; and in him*, as that *one Seed of Abraham* in whom all the families, *all the nations* of believers *were to be blessed*, let us center our hopes, and be very solicitous that we *by faith* may be united to him, and so may have a claim to all the privileges of *the promise* under him. 21, 20, 17, 16

Thus let us continue to make use of *the law*, not as the foundation of our hope towards God, but as *our school-master to bring us to Christ* by the discovery it has given of our need of him and, being sensible that it hath *shut up all under sin*, from which we cannot be delivered but by *the faith* the gospel hath *revealed*, may we be led to seek the benefit *of the promise*, that, being *the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus*, we may be *heirs* of eternal life and blessedness. 24, 22, 23

SECT. VII.

The Apostle illustrates the superior excellency and freedom of the state into which believers as the sons of God are brought by the gospel, above the state which they were in before under the law, when they were only as minors under a rigorous tutor; and at the same time he reproves the Galatians, that they were no more resolute in adhering to that better dispensation, the first tidings of which they had received from him with so much affection. Gal. IV. 1—20.

Gal. IV. 1.
NOW I say, *that* the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all;

Galatians IV. 1.

I Observed to you, my friends, a little before, that while we were under the law, we were as in a state of minority; (chap. iii. 24, 25.) *Now* for the further illustration of that thought, by what is known to be the usual method of dealing with children, *I say*, [*that*] *so long as the heir* of the most plentiful estate *is a child* in his non-age, *he*, with respect to the possession and SECT. VII. Gal. IV. 1.

SECT. VII.

and free use of it, and to the right of managing it in his own person, *differeth nothing from a servant* or bond-man, *though he be* in title and by
Gal. IV. 2. right of inheritance *lord of all: But* during his minority he *is under the* authority and restraint of *governors and guardians*, to whose tutorage and management he is committed, *till the time appointed by the father* when he shall be deemed of age, and be at liberty to manage
3 his affairs himself. *So likewise we* who having been Jews before, have now embraced the faith of the gospel, *when we were* but as *children* in minority, though we had the promise and hope of the Messiah, *were* held *in bondage under* the discipline of the law; in which we were employed, in a way suited to the imperfect circumstances of an infant-state, about *worldly elements* [a], or about those inferior things which are but like the letters of the alphabet when compared with that sublime sense which they may be the means of teaching, when their power is duly understoood, and the use of them become
4 familiar to the mind: *But when the fulness of the time*, which had been marked out by the prophets for the accomplishment of this great event, *was come*, and we were arrived at the age appointed by our Father for entering upon our adult state, *God sent forth his* own *Son*, to give us the inheritance of the promise he had made of pardon and salvation, and brings us to a state of liberty and happiness. For to this end it was that the Messiah came; and that he might effect this grand design, he was pleased indeed to appear in a most humble form, taking upon him mortal flesh, *made* of the substance *of a woman*, according to the great original promise (Gen. iii. 15,) and was thus *made under the* dis-
5 cipline of the Mosaic *law* in all its rigour; *That* so by his submitting, not only to the precepts of the law, but likewise to the penalty and curse of it, *he might redeem them who were under* the yoke and curse of *the law*, and bring us into an happy

2 But is under tutors, and governors, until the time appointed of the father.

3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:

4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law.

5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive

[a] *Worldly elements.*] The Jewish *rituals* might be so called, not only on account of the relation which they had to *worldly things*, by which they were adapted to the low conceptions of *children*, who are most affected with sensible objects, and have no taste for spiritual and heavenly things; but also, because the *same kind of things* had before obtained in the *world*, and were in use among the *heathens*, though under the Mosaic law they were directed to a better object and end.—Some would consider it as referring to the *unfitness* of the Israelites, in the infancy of their commonwealth, for receiving a more rational and sublime plan of *religion*, having been used in Egypt to so many pompous *ceremonies*.

[b] *Crying*

receive the adoption of sons.

happy liberty, both from the sentence of it, and from any future obligation to obey the ceremonial part of it; *that*, instead of that servile spirit which the law breathed, *we might* all, as believers in Christ, *receive the adoption of sons*, and see and know the happy privilege to which we are advanced in consequence of it. For unto all who are partakers of it, it is attended with the most joyful and beneficial effects; *and because ye are* thus admitted by the gospel to the full character and dignity of his *sons*, *God hath* graciously *sent forth* an abundant effusion of *the Spirit of his Son into your hearts*, O ye believing Galatians, as well as into the hearts of the Jewish converts, *crying*, *Abba*, *Father*[b]; giving us all, both Jews and Gentiles, in our different languages, an equal freedom in addressing ourselves to him with the overflowings of filial confidence and love.

SECT. vii.

Gal. IV. 5.

6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

6

7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

So that now, O Christian, whatever be thy rank or station, or whether thou be Jew or Gentile, *thou art no longer* to look upon thyself as *a servant* or bond-man, or as standing on a level with such an one in point of present enjoyment; *but*, on the contrary, as admitted to the liberty and freedom of *a son* at age: *and if* thou art indeed *a son* in such circumstances, *then* it follows, by an happy consequence, that thou art *an heir* of all the promises *of God through Christ*, and hast a claim to God himself, as to thy father and thy portion.

7

8 Howbeit, then when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.

But if this was the case with the Jewish converts, that they were in a state of servitude while they continued under the law, the bondage of the Gentiles in their unregenerate state must have been greatly worse; and it is still more absurd and unreasonable as to you Gentile converts, that when you have been called into a glorious liberty by the gospel, you should not entertain such liberal sentiments as are suited to it, but should be willing to submit to another servitude: for *then indeed*, *when ye knew not* the only true *God* and the way of being accepted with him, *ye were in bondage to those* stupid idols *which*

8

b *Crying, Abba, Father.*] The learned Mr. *Selden (de succ. in Bona Def.* cap. iv.) hath brought a very pertinent quotation from the *Babylonian Gemara*, to prove that it was not allowed to *slaves* to use the title of *Abba* in addressing the *master* of the family to which they belonged, or the correspondent title of *Imma*, or *mother*, when speaking to the *mistress* of it.

SECT. vii.

which by nature are no Gods[c]; and greatly were your rational natures debased by so ignoble and absurd a service. *But now, after that ye have known* the mind and will of *God, or rather are* so happy as to be *known of God*, and he has shewn his favour to you, and brought you to the knowledge of himself by the instruction of his word and by the influence of his Spirit, *how turn ye again* into another kind of servitude *to the weak and poor elements* of the Mosaic ceremonies[d], which are so far beneath that glorious and happy state into which ye are called? Elements, *to which ye* unaccountably *desire again to be in bondage anew*[e], changing indeed the form and object of your ceremonies, but retaining many of the same low, perplexing, and unprofitable observances. For as under heathenism you had your frequent feasts in honour of imaginary deities, so now *ye observe* the Jewish solemnities with as scrupulous an exactness; even your sabbath *days, and* the beginning of your *months* or new moons, *and* your *times* of grand festivals, *and* your sabbatical *years*, and those of jubilee. Indeed, my brethren, when I think of these things, *I am afraid of you, lest* it should be found that *I have bestowed upon you* so much affectionate *labour in vain*[f], while, after all the pains that I have taken to instruct you in the faith and liberty

Gal. IV. 9.

9 But now after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

10 Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.

11 I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.

c *Ye were in bondage to those which by nature are no gods.*] It is evident here, that though these Christians had before their conversion been *idolatrous Gentiles* the *Judaizing teachers* were desirous of subjecting them to the *Mosaic ceremonies*: from whence it appears how much those *learned writers* are mistaken who think the Jews only imposed these ceremonies on those who were already, as they affect to call them, *Proselytes of the gate*, or worshippers of the true God; and how vain is the attempt to prove from hence, that the injunction of *abstaining from blood* is to be considered as *peculiar to them*.

d *Weak and poor elements.*] The ceremonies of the law were *weak*, as they had no sufficient power to cleanse the soul from sin, and justify the sinner in the sight of God; and *poor*, as they could not confer the spiritual riches of the gospel, pardon and peace, and the assurance of enjoying life and happiness. Besides which it is to be remembered, that those who were most zealous for imposing the observance of the Mosaic ceremonies on the *Gentile converts*, were of the sect of the Pharisees (Acts xv. 5), who therefore would not fail to impose a great many *additional observances*, taught only by the tradition of the *elders*; which may sufficiently account for the *low terms* which the *apostle* uses upon this occasion. Compare Rom. viii. 3; and Heb. vii. 18.

e *Ye desire again to be in bondage anew.*] It is certain they could not be said *to be in bondage* to the Jewish ceremonies *anew* who had never been acquainted with them; but it was *a bondage* in some measure *of the same kind*; and that is all that can be intended here.—I cannot think ανωθεν should be rendered *from above*; as if the meaning were, they had received such notice or demands from Jerusalem.

f *I am afraid of you,* &c.] Some have observed, there was a greater reason for this apprehension, as the fixing the time of the *Jewish feasts* depended upon the grand sanhedrim; so that their *observing them* would bring them into such an intercourse with and dependence upon *that court* as might be greatly to the hazard of their Christianity.

liberty of the gospel, you appear to act as if you had forgotten what I taught you, and would be seeking justification from the law. SECT. vii.

Gal. IV. 12.

12 Brethren, I beseech you, be as I *am*; for I *am* as ye *are*: ye have not injured me at all.

Give me leave, *brethren*, while *I* am thus expostulating with you and reproving you, most earnestly to *beseech you* with all tenderness, that ye *be as I [am]*; that ye maintain the same affectionate regard for me as I bear towards you; and that ye candidly receive those sentiments, which I, to whose authority in the church ye can be no strangers, have been inculcating upon you. And this I may the rather expect from what I have experienced in myself; *for* it is well known there was a time when *I [was] as ye [are]*, as much bigoted to the Mosaic rituals and Pharisaic traditions as any of you all can be[g]: but God hath now taught me better; and that your hearts may also feel the power of his grace, and every prejudice may be subdued and rooted out, I am solicitous that the purity of that truth which I have learnt in so extraordinary a manner, and which I have faithfully preached among you, may continue with you. Remember too, that I am Paul your apostle and your friend, for whom you have formerly expressed the highest affection; and as, whatever instability you may have shewn as to some important doctrines which I taught you, *ye have not* personally *injured me at all*, I can have no ill-will to you, nor any inclination to find fault with you on my account.

13 Ye know how, through infirmity of the flesh, I preached the gospel unto you at the first.

But, whatever change may be in you, I still retain the same affectionate regard I manifested for you at my first coming to you, when I was treated by you with the greatest respect, and you esteemed yourselves happy under my ministry, notwithstanding all the disadvantages that attended it: for *ye* well *know that I preached the gospel among you at first*, when ye were entire strangers to the happy contents of it, *in the infirmity of the flesh*, and indeed with a great mixture 13

[g] *I [was] as ye [are]*, &c.] The words και εγω ως υμεις are ambiguous, and may either signify, *I was*, or *I am as ye are*. Our *translation* takes them in the latter sense; and then it must express *his unanimity* with them, which he urges as an argument for *their unanimity* with him, and affection to him. And as this suits the connection with the latter part of the verse, I have expressed that sense in the *paraphrase*; though the former seems *preferable*, as more weighty, copious, and striking, and indeed I think more natural too; for it is certain many of them were much prejudiced against him (chap. i. 6: iv. 16), while he was most tenderly affected towards them.

SECT. vii.

ture of weakness in my manner of expressing myself; which was the consequence of that disorder in the whole system of my nerves, that was occasioned by the revelations I had the honour to receive some time before I came among you:

Gal. IV. 13.

14 *And* yet with respect to this *my temptation that was* seated *in my flesh*[h] (for a temptation indeed it was, and sometimes threw me into greater anxiety than it ought to have occasioned), I had however the consolation to see, that *you did not despise* it, *or reject* [*me*] *with scorn* on account of it; *but*, on the contrary, struck with the importance of my message and those evident proofs of a Divine co-operation that attended it, ye *received me as* if I had been *an angel of God* come down from heaven to you, [*yea*] with *as* much affection and submission as it can be supposed you would have shewn to our Divine master *Christ Jesus* himself, if, instead of sending me as his messenger and ambassador, he 15 had visited you in person. *What was then your felicity*[i]*?* and how great was the sense you had of your happiness, upon your first receiving the glad tidings of the gospel from me, when such a change was made in your state, and your hearts were under the impulse of such holy affections, as

14 And my temptation which was in my flesh, ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, *even* as Christ Jesus.

15 Where is then the blessedness you spake of? for I bear you record that, if *it had*

h *My temptation that was in my flesh.*] What the *apostle* here refers to must have been so well known to the Galatians, that it was needless he should give a particular description of it in his writing to them.—Dr. Hammond and others explain it, of the *persecutions* which he suffered for preaching the gospel: but these could be no cause why the Galatians should *despise* him, and were so far from making him contemptible, that they must rather be an inducement to their receiving him with more respect, when he could bear such sufferings in vindication of the doctrine he delivered.—The *apostle* speaks of it as an *infirmity* and *temptation* seated *in his flesh*, which by the effect it had upon him might render both his person and his speech obnoxious to contempt, and have a tendency to make him despicable in the eyes of others; agreeable to which he elsewhere mentions it as objected to him, that *his bodily presence was weak, and his speech contemptible* (2 Cor. x. 10), and, on the whole, there seems to be so manifest a resemblance between his representing *this temptation* as *in his flesh*, and what he says of *the thorn in the flesh*, that was given to *humble him* after *the abundance of his revelations* (2 Cor. xii. 7), that I can see no room to scruple why we may not take it for an effect of that memorable circumstance which must have happened some time before his preaching first to the Galatians, and was attended with such consequences as might still be discernible in him, since it was *not removed* on his desire to be delivered from it. See *note* f, on 2 Cor. xii. 7, p. 215.

i *What was then your felicity?*] Some think that St. Paul here refers to the high things which they spake of *himself*, and to their *blessing him* for what he taught them; and Mr. Locke would have it, that the sense of this clause must be, "What benedictions did you then pour out upon me?" But howsoever this would be, the consequence of their *accounting themselves happy* in having him for their *apostle*, and being instructed in the gospel by him, that upon this they would be *heaping blessings on him*, in testimony of the high regard which they had for him; it does not suit so well with the original, which rather is expressive of the sense they had of *their own happiness* in being enlightened by him in the knowledge of the gospel; for such appears to be the proper meaning of the words μακαρισμος υμων. Compare Rom. iv. 6, 9.

k *They*

had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.

as that you could not but congratulate yourselves and me upon it? You cannot surely have forgot it; *for I bear you witness, that if* [*it had been*] *possible* you could have done it, and I could have received any benefit by it, *you would* even *have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me,* as a convincing proof of your affection for me. And why should there now be such a change in your disposition towards me? *Am I therefore become your enemy,* or have you any reason to account me such, unless it be *because I tell you the truth,* and bear a faithful testimony to the uncorrupted gospel which I desire to maintain among you in all the purity in which I planted it? SECT. vii. Gal. IV. 15. 16

16 Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?

17 They zealously affect you, *but* not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them.

I do not indeed impute this alienation of affection wholly to yourselves; for I know that a great many dishonest artifices have been used to prejudice your minds against me, and there are those among you who would endeavour to persuade you that *they zealously affect you,* and have an extraordinary concern for your welfare, [*but*] are not upright and sincere, and what they aim at is *not well,* as they are seeking to subvert the truth, and to seduce and draw you off to their own sentiments; *yea, they would* quite exclude and *shut us out* from any share in your regards[k], *that ye may zealously affect* and be attached to *them,* and, having engrossed you to themselves, they may thus have an opportunity of promoting their own secular views at your expence. *But* it is fit you should remember, that [*it is*] *good* for you *to be zealously affected always in that which is good*[l]: for as the beauty and excellence of zeal is to be estimated, not by the degree of it considered in itself, but by the object to which it is directed; so too the warmth of your affection towards an object truly worthy of it should be at all times equally maintained; 17 18

18 But *it is* good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and

and

k *They would shut us out.*] Though most *copies* read it εκκλεισαι υμας the sense appears more natural and easy, if we read *us* rather than *you:* and as there is no doubt but the *apostle* here refers to the endeavours used by their *false teachers* to alienate their affections from *himself,* it may induce us to prefer *this reading,* which has the countenance of some *copies,* and upon this account is put by our *translators* in the *margin.*

l *To be zealously affected always in that which is good.*] Εν καλω either may refer to a *good person,* or a *good thing,* and may be understood of their continuing *zealous* in their affection, either to *himself,* or to *the truth* that he had preached. But *as* the *apostle* had been speaking of *himself* in the foregoing *verses,* he likewise seems to have still in view the warmth of their *affection to him* when he was *present with them,* though he expresses it in a graceful way, with such a latitude, as may include their zeal for *his doctrine,* as well as for *his person:* and I have chosen, therefore, not to limit it to either in the *translation.*

SECT. VII.

and the same fervent zeal which you have formerly expressed, ought to be manifested by you, *not only when I am present with you*, but in my absence too, if you really think me to deserve your regards, and have indeed received the truth in the love of it.

and not only when I am present with you.

Gal. IV. 18.

19 What shall I say to you, *my* dear *little children, of whom* I hoped I had begotten you in Christ Jesus through the gospel (1 Cor. iv. 15)? I am in great anxiety of heart concerning you, and am so earnestly solicitous you may be found to have received the grace of God in truth, that I declare, with all the undissembled tenderness of a most affectionate parent, *I travail* as it were *in birth again*, and am in pangs about you, *till Christ be* fully *formed in you*, and I have the happiness to see clear evidences of the prevalence of true Christianity in all its branches in you, by which it may appear you are renewed after the image of Christ, and are really brought

19 My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you,

20 to a life of faith in him. But since I find you have lost so much by my absence, and have unhappily been set upon by those who have took the opportunity of it to practise upon you, *I could* heartily *wish to be present with you* even *now, and* to see cause *to change my voice* towards you, so as to speak to you in terms of greater confidence, assurance, and complacency, than I now can; *for* indeed *I am in* great *doubt* and in much perplexity *about you;* and though I do not absolutely despair of your recovery and establishment, yet I am not without very discouraging apprehensions lest, after all the pains that I have taken with you, the good effects of my labours among you should in a great measure be lost.

20 I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1, 2 As the *church* in general was *in its minority* till the full revelation of the gospel came, so is every true member of it *a minor* while he continues in this world, and is in many instances *inferior to some* who have no part in the *inheritance;* but the time will come, when, as an *heir* who is deemed *of age*, he shall be admitted into *full possession;* and it will amply and immediately repay all the abasements and mortifications of that state in which the wisdom and love of our *heavenly Father* hath at present placed us.

The

The grand foundation of this hope is that infinite *love* which we can never sufficiently acknowledge and admire, even the love of *God* our Father, in *sending forth his Son* at the appointed time, *made of a woman*, and *made under the law*, subject at once both to its precepts and its penalty, *to redeem us* when we were under its condemning sentence, and to introduce us to all the privileges of that Divine *adoption* which we *receive* from him. May each of us, in consequence of it, receive more and more of that *spirit of adoption* whereby we may be enabled to raise our souls to God, with all the holy overflowings of genuine filial affection, while we daily, *cry*, *Abba*, *Father*, "Send forth, O God, this *Spirit of thy Son in our hearts*, whatever worldly benefits and delights thou mayest deny us; that we may thus rejoice in the assurance that we are *heirs of God through Christ*, and may be able to glory in this, that *the Lord is our inheritance!*"

SECT. vii. Ver. 4, 5 6 7

If we thus *know God*, being delivered from the *bondage* of corruption, and from those *idolatrous* regards to the creature to which our hearts are naturally so inclined; let us acknowledge that it is because we *rather have been known of him*, and being apprehended by his grace, he hath received us into the number of *his sons*, and given us the knowledge of *the truth as it is in Jesus*. Let us act suitably to such a character, and be solicitous to maintain the *purity* of that *religion* by which we are brought to such exalted dignities and hopes. And let our hearts be always open to receive *the truth* in the love of it; *not despising the infirmities* of those that preach the gospel to us in faithfulness, nor allowing ourselves at any time to look upon them as *our enemies*, for the plainness with which they may *tell us the truth*; which is sometimes the case with regard to those who might once have been ready, in the forwardness of their zeal and affection, almost to *have plucked out their own eyes* for ministers whom they afterwards slight and forsake.

9 14 16 15

Let us labour after *a steadiness* in our temper and conduct, and take heed that *our zeal* be so guided as that it may center upon *objects* truly *good*, and may continue to act in proportion to their excellency; always suspecting those principles and those persons who would *alienate our hearts* from *any* of the *faithful servants of Christ*, because they do not agree with our sentiments about the *circumstantials* of religion.

18 17

Such as the apostle *Paul* expresses here with so much tenderness will be the *desires* of every faithful *minister* for the *spiritual children* which God hath given him: and where he sees reason to *stand in doubt* of any of whom he had once good hopes through grace, *lest* perhaps he should *have bestowed upon them labour in vain*, it will give him a deep and a tender distress, and he will,

19, 20 11

as

SECT. VII.

as it were, *travail in birth again, till Christ be formed in them.* His very heart will be in pain for this: and what can be a greater or more worthy object of desire? O that it might appear that *Christ* is *formed* in the very souls of *all* that are called by his name! So would *ministers* have a firm foundation of joy in them, and *they* of hope towards God for that eternal happiness which can only be built upon *Christ;* upon *Christ formed in them*, as the only well-grounded *hope of glory* (Col. i. 27.)

SECT. VIII.

The Apostle illustrates the subject of his foregoing discourse by an allegory borrowed from what is written of Sarah and Hagar, and their respective seed. Gal. IV. 21, *to the end.* V. 1.

GALATIANS IV. 21.

SECT. VIII.

I HAVE been saying a great deal to take you off from any further thoughts of becoming subject to the Mosaic law: but if you still have
Gal. IV. 21. any inclination to it, *tell me* now, *ye who are desirous of being under the law, do ye not hear* and call to mind what is said in the book of *the law* itself, which is so often read in your assemblies? There is a passage even in the first book of that sacred volume, which is very capable of being improved to your instruction, if you
22 rightly enter into it. *For it is written* there (Gen. xvi. 15, and xxi. 2, 3), *that Abraham*, the great patriarch, in a descent from whom so many are ready to glory, *had two sons*, who, though equally related to him, were by no means equal with regard to the blessings which they were to inherit: *the one* of these he had *by* Hagar *a bond-woman, and the other by* Sarah *a free-woman*, whose name signifies a Lady or Princess, and so may be understood as importing not only liberty, but authority. *But* there
23 was a great difference between them; for *he* [*who was born*] *of* Hagar *the bond-woman*, that is, Ishmael, *was born* only *according to the flesh*, and produced in the common order of nature, without any particular promise of God, or any unusual interposition of his power and Providence; *whereas he* [*who was born*] *of* Sarah *the free-woman*, that is, Isaac, [*was born*] *by virtue of the promise*, when his parents were in the course of nature absolutely incapable of producing

GAL. IV. 21.

TELL me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?

22 For it is written, that Abraham had two sons; the one by a bond-maid, the other by a free-woman.

23 But he *who was* of the bond-woman was born after the flesh; but he of the free-woman *was* by promise.

ducing a child; and upon him the peculiar blessings of the Divine promise were entailed. SECT. viii.

24 Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar,

Now I would lead you to an evangelical improvement of this remarkable and mystical fact; *which* contains many concurrent circumstances, so nearly resembling what we now observe with regard to the Jewish and Christian religion, and the professors of both, that I cannot but propose them to you as *things* that *may be* profitably *allegorized. For these* two persons (Hagar and Sarah) *are*, that is, may well be considered as representing, *the two* celebrated *covenants*, or the two dispensations of the law and gospel, the tenor of which is so different: *the one* that was delivered *from mount Sinai*, is that *which bringeth forth her children to bondage which is Hagar*, whose servile disposition and state may be considered as an emblem of that less ingenuous dispensation. *This Hagar, I say*, whose name signifies a Rock, *is* a representation of those who are under the law given from *mount Sinai in Arabia*[a], in the deserts of which the Hagarenes who descended from Ishmael were settled; *and* it *answers* in the allegory *to the present* state of the earthly *Jerusalem, which with her children is in* a state of *bondage*, as being in subjection to so many ritual observances, and under a sentence of wrath on the commission of the least wilful offence, which hath the greatest tendency to produce a mean and disingenuous fear. *But the Jerusalem above*, or that celestial society to which all that believe, both Jews and Gentiles, are come, and are united, under the new and better dispensation of the gospel-covenant, *is the free woman*, answering to Sarah in the superior character and state to *which* it introduces us, and *is* indeed *the mother of us all*[b]; to whom we as Christians do all

Gal. IV. 24.

25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem, which now is, and is in bondage with her children:

25

26 But Jerusalem which is above, is free, which is the mother of us all.

26

a *This Hagar, I say*, &c.] The particle γαρ cannot here have its *illative* force, since it would be very injurious to the *apostle* to suppose he meant to argue thus, *Mount Sinai is Hagar—for this Hagar is mount Sinai.* It must therefore here signify the same with *I say*, and only introduce the repetition of a thought which the *apostle* was desirous to inculcate; as it often does else where. Compare Rom. iii. 2, and xv. 27.

b *Jerusalem above is the free woman, which is the mother of us all.*] Some have thought the *apostle* here suggests an argument to prove the *liberty* of the *Christian church* from the *great number* of its *converts*, which would have rendered the observation of many of the *Mosaic precepts* impossible: but that intimation, if intended, must have been very obscure. It is more reasonable to conclude that he refers to the *free genius* of Christianity, which, when compared with Judaism, is extremely obvious, and made it evidently fit, in the illustration of this *allegory*, to consider *the free woman*, that is, Sarah, as representing the *church* under this nobler form.

c *For*

SECT. VIII.

all belong, and by virtue of our relation to whom we not only are at present in a more liberal and happy condition, but become heirs, as Isaac was of the promises which God was pleased to make to our father Abraham.

Gal. IV. 26.

27 And there is a passage in the prophecy of Isaiah, which may naturally suggest such a thought: *for it is written* there [c], with reference to the greater freedom and enlargement of the church in the times of the Messiah, (Isa. liv. 1.) "*Rejoice*, and be exceeding glad, *thou barren, who* for a long time *didst not bear; break forth* into singing, *and cry* aloud for joy, *thou who didst not travail in birth: for* such is now thy happy state, that *many more are the children of the desolate than of her who had an husband.*" The children of the Christian church, the spiritual seed of the true Sarah, shall (as the prophet there suggests) be abundantly more numerous than those of the Jewish ever were; and what we see at present of its enlargement and prosperity may encourage our faith

27 For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not; for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.

[c] *For it is written.*] Mr. Pierce has a learned and ingenious *dissertation* (at the end of his paraphrase on the Philippians) to prove that the *apostle* here asserts that Isaiah, in the passage he quotes from his prophecy, points out the *allegorical correspondence* between the *Christian church* and Sarah, on which he had been insisting in this *section*; and accordingly this critic renders those words in ver. 24. ἅτινα ἐστιν ἀλληγορούμενα, *which things are allegorized*, that is, are actually turned to this sense by the *prophet*: who (as he says) calls out, in this livth. chapter, to some *woman* celebrated for *having children* after long *barrenness*, to shew that something *like this* should happen after the sufferings and resurrection of the Messiah, which had been foretold in the liiid. And having observed that no person mentioned in the *Old Testament* can so properly be addressed in such language as Sarah, who in respect of *children* might be called *desolate*, whereas Hagar was *the married wife and mother*, he thinks it reasonable to conclude from hence, that she was referred to by Isaiah, as St. Paul according to him asserts in this text—But, not to insist on the impropriety of giving Hagar, who was only a *slave* and a *concubine*, the character and title of *the married wife*, in opposition to Sarah, the principal *wife* and undoubted mistress of the family, I think the context in Isaiah, plainly shews that the *prophet* refers to the *future conversion* of the Jews, and the increase and prosperity of that happy nation after its long rejection, as far exceeding what it had known before in its most favoured state. (Isa. liv. 6, *&c. seq.*) And therefore I would choose to explain this passage in St. Paul, as an *allusion*, rather than an *argument*; which frees it from many objections and embarrassments to which it would otherwise have appeared liable.—If any should urge that *such glosses* are of little importance, it may be sufficient to reply, that they were much in the *Jewish taste*, and that we may assure ourselves that the *apostles* were preserved from any thing in them which was not perfectly agreeable to *the mind of the Spirit*.—On the whole, I entirely agree with Mr. Chandler, that this part of the *epistle* was not intended to *prove* Christianity, but to *illustrate* the different genius of that and Judaism, and to shew that not all the *carnal* descendants of Abraham, but the *spiritual* offspring only, were *heirs*, even according to the principles which the Jews themselves readily admitted. See *Chandler of Miracles*, p. 345, 346. And Dr. Syke's interpretation agrees with this. Compare *Sykes on the Truth of Christianity*, p. 198, 199.

faith in the promises relating to its yet more universal spread and brighter glory in the latter day. SECT. VIII.

Gal. IV. 28.

28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.

Now, to apply what I have been saying to ourselves, *we brethren, like Isaac, are the children* of Abraham, not according to the flesh, but as born of the Spirit in virtue *of the promise;* and so are heirs of the blessings of the covenant, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, in consequence of our believing in Christ, and being united to him, as the Seed in which it was declared that all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

29 But as then he that was born after the flesh, persecuted him *that was born* after the Spirit, even so *it is* now.

But indeed the parallel holds farther still, in this respect; that *as then he who was born after the flesh*, that is, Ishmael, in whose production there was nothing beyond the common course of nature; mocked and derided, and so *persecuted him* [*who was born*] *after the Spirit*, that is, Isaac, who was produced as the spiritual seed by the special energy of God's miraculous power, *even so*, [*it is*] *now;* the carnal Jews, who are the seed of Abraham, after the flesh, abuse and persecute us Christians, who are Abraham's seed after the Spirit. 29

30 Nevertheless, what saith the scripture? Cast out the bond-woman and her son: for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free-woman.

But what saith the scripture in regard to this? The oracle is correspondent to the case before us, for it there follows, (Gen. xxi. 10.) "*Cast out the bond-woman and her* insolent *son; for the son of the bond-woman shall not inherit with* Isaac, *the son of the free woman;*" which howsoever grievous it might seem to Abraham, when it was said by Sarah, yet God himself confirmed the sentence, and directed that it should be done; and in like manner also shall the rebellious Jews be treated who, notwithstanding their boasted descent from Abraham, shall be cast out of the church and family of God, and shall be visibly expelled and (as it were) turned out of doors by him, as the mocking Ishmael was, for insulting those whom God hath chosen for his covenant-children, and shall not be permitted to be heirs of the promise with them. 30

31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bond-woman, but of the free.

So then, upon the whole, my *brethren, we* that believe in Christ *are not children of the bond-woman*, under subjection to the servile dispensation of the law; *but* we are children *of the free-woman*, and have the privilege of being called into a state of liberty under the spiritual covenant of the gospel. See to it, *therefore*, that you strenuously maintain the privilege and freedom you are called to, and without yielding 31

GAL. V. 1. Stand fast therefore in the liberty

GAL. V. 1.

SECT. viii.

in the least to those who are endeavouring to seduce you to a subjection to the law, let me exhort you to *stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free*[d]: contend earnestly for the purity and honour of that religion which he hath established, *and be not* persuaded to be *entangled again with the yoke of bondage*; of which you appear to be in danger, from what I hear of your circumstances, and am informed of the temper of some among you.

Gal. v. 1. berty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

IMPROVEMENT.

Chap. iv. 21. & *seq.* LET us not allow ourselves to *cavil* at a passage like this that we have now been reading, but submit to the authority of this *divinely-inspired interpreter*, who we are sure was enabled to explain and improve *scripture* in such a manner as he, by whose *Spirit* it was dictated, knew to be most agreeable to its *spiritual* design.

iv. 31. Let us bless God, that we are *children of the free-woman*; that we are so happy as to be called to so liberal and ingenuous a dispensation, and are not fettered with that *yoke of bondage*, or doomed to those servile terrors, which would have been so grievous, had we been left to them unsupported by the grace of the *gospel*, and which would so much have abated our comforts, had they been incorporated with the *Christian* dispensation.

27 Well may we *rejoice* to hear in *prophecy* of the glorious *increase* here promised to the *church*; let us be thankful that it hath in part been accomplished: and let it invigorate our prayers for the hastening that happy time, when *the desolate* shall *enlarge the place of her tents, and stretch forth the curtains of her habitations*; when she shall *lengthen her cords, and strengthen her stakes*; and, though long *afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted*, she shall see *her pavement of fair colours, and her foundations of sapphires: her windows shall be made of agates, and her gates of carbuncles.* (Isa. liv. 1, 2, 11, 12.)

29 In the mean time, let us guard against the *disingenuous* temper of *the son of the bond-woman*, against every thing that may look like *persecuting our brethren.* It is much *better*, if such be the will of God, that we should *suffer* ill usage *from them*; staying our

d *Therefore stand fast in the liberty*, &c.] This exhortation is so evidently grounded on what the *apostle* had been saying just before, that it seems best to be connected with it, and I have therefore placed it at the end of *this section.* It is made the close of the *fourth chapter* in three of Stephens' copies; which seems to be more proper than to make it, as we generally do, the beginning of another *chapter.*

a *If*

our souls upon *the promises* of God, which shall all be assuredly accomplished in their season. Yet may all this meekness and gentleness be exercised, in full consistency with that generous care to *stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free*, which we owe to ourselves, our brethren, and our children; and indeed owe to the honour of our common *Christianity*, and to the regard we should express to him who hath broken *the yoke* from our shoulders; who cannot be pleased to see us voluntarily *entangling ourselves with it anew*, or meanly lying down under the oppressive hands of those who in the abuse of his sacred name would presume again to *bind it* upon us.

SECT. viii.

Chap. v. 1.

SECT. IX.

The Apostle urges them more resolutely to retain the doctrine of justification by Divine grace; and renews his caution against the efforts of those seducing teachers who had done so much to alienate their minds from it. Gal. V. 2—15.

GAL. V. 2.

BEHOLD, I Paul, say unto you, That if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.

GALATIANS V. 2.

I HAVE exhorted you, as children of the promise, and born not of the bond-woman, but the free, to maintain your Christian liberty, and guard against the encroachments of those who would break in upon it. And I now plainly tell you, that I particularly mean those Judaizing teachers with whom the church is at present so much infested: in reference to whose tenets, *behold, I Paul*, whatever may have falsely been suggested of my favouring their sentiments and sometimes preaching circumcision, expressly *say unto you, That if ye*, who are by birth and education Gentiles, submit to *be circumcised*, with a dependance on the observation of those Jewish rites to which ye are thereby obliged for your justification before God[a], *Christ shall profit you nothing*, and all that he hath done and suffered will be of no advantage to you: for if the whole confidence of the soul do not rest upon him for salvation, he will reject those divided

SECT. ix.

Gal. V. 2.

a *If ye be circumcised*, with a dependance on the observation, &c.] Common sense plainly requires to take the assertion with *such limits*; which is also necessary to reconcile it with the hopes of all Jewish believers, and with the conduct of St. Paul himself in circumcising Timothy (Acts xvi. 3). And this accounts for the *indifference* with which he elsewhere speaks of *circumcision* as availing nothing. See chap. v. 6; vi. 15; and 1 Cor. vii. 19.

b *Faith*

SECT. IX.

vided regards which are offered to him, and interpret them as an affront rather than an acceptable homage.

Gal. V. 3.

And I repeat it as a point of the highest importance, which is agreeable to what I have always preached, and do now *testify again to every* particular *man* among you *who is circumcised*, in the view I have just been mentioning, with a dependance on that rite for justification, *that he is* thereby become *a debtor to do the whole law:* for as circumcision binds a man fully to observe all the other rituals of the Mosaic dispensation, so will the tenet which I now oppose leave you under the rigor of that covenant which required perfect and sinless obedience, and left every wilful transgressor under a curse, from which by the law he could never be delivered.

3 For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

4 It is therefore evident that *Christ is become of none effect to* such of *you*, but must have appeared and died in vain as to any benefit you would have by him, *whosoever of you are* seeking to be *justified by* the works of *the law;* yea by this means, whatever your profession may have been of a regard to Christ, *ye are* indeed *fallen from* the *grace* of the gospel, and have in effect re-

4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

5 nounced your expectations from it. *For we* who are true Christians, and have been savingly enlightened in the knowledge of the truth, do, *through* the influences of *the Spirit*, whose gifts and graces are so glorious a seal of the gospel, *wait for the hope of righteousness* and life, not on account of any claim or title we have to it by our obedience to the law, but *by* a sincere and operative *faith*, casting our souls on Christ as condemned creatures who have no hope in themselves, and trusting in the grace of God for justification through the redemption he

5 For we, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

6 has wrought. And herein we act according to the true tenor of the gospel; *for in* the dispensation of grace by *Christ Jesus*, to those who would obtain salvation by him, *neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision*, and no man will either be saved or condemned for being or not being circumcised; *but* our interest in the blessings of the gospel depends upon a sincere *faith* in Christ, *which operates by* an unfeigned *love* to God and man[b], and so engages

6 For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

b *Faith which operates by love.*] There is some degree of *ambiguity* in the original expression, δι' αγαπης ενεργουμενη, which is capable of being differently rendered, and may

gages us, from a principle of holy gratitude, to yield a sincere obedience to all the known will of God, renouncing any dependance on that obedience, how complete soever it may seem, as the meritorious cause of our acceptance with him. SECT. ix. Gal. V. 6.

7 Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?

This is true genuine Christianity; and you once received it as such, and appeared to be under the influence of it: in regard to which I may say, *Ye did* once *run well* at your first setting out in the Christian race, and seemed to exert yourselves in a very happy manner; *who* then of late *has hindered you*[c] *from obeying the truth*, with that readiness and perseverance which might reasonably have been expected from so hopeful a beginning, and has turned you out of the way in which you were making so fair a progress: Of *this* I am sure, that the *persuasion* you now seem to have entertained of the necessity of mixing Judaism with Christianity, and seeking justification, in part at least, by Mosaical observances, [*comes*] *not from him that called you* into the profession of the gospel[d]; nor did I teach you any such lesson when I was made the happy instrument of bringing you to the Christian faith, but have largely and earnestly inculcated the contrary. There were indeed some secret workings of this pernicious principle which I now oppose, that early became visible among you; and I find they have spread in such a manner as to shew that *a little leaven*, if it be suffered to continue, operates unseen, till it diffuseth itself on every side, and *leaveneth the whole mass.* But having laid the matter thus before you, and warned you of the danger of this leaven, with that fidelity and zeal which love to your souls and a regard to the honour of Christ requires, *I have* this *confidence in you through* 7

8 This persuasion *cometh* not of him that calleth you. 8

9 A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. 9

10 I have confidence in you through the Lord, that you will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth 10

may signify either *which operates* and works *by love*, or *which is wrought*, inspired, and perfected *by love*; which latter sense some have preferred, and have taken occasion from hence to shew how much *charity* tends to establish and perfect *faith*. But I prefer the more *usual sense*, which I think to be authorised by the use of the same word, Eph. iii. 20, and Col. i. 29.

c *Who hath hindered you?*] It hath been observed that ανεκοψε is an Olympic expression, answerable to ἐβράβευε; and it properly signifies *coming across the course* while a person is running in it in such a manner as to *jostle* and throw him out of the way.

d *From him that called you.*] This expression of *him that called*, or *calleth you*, agrees with what he had used before, chap. i. 6; and in both places it would seem he means *himself*. See *note* f on that passage, sect. i. p. 239.

e *He*

SECT. ix.

Gal. V. 10.

through the grace of *the Lord* Jesus, on whom I humbly depend for the influences of his Spirit, and to whose blessing I commit all my endeavours, *that ye will be no otherwise minded*, and entertain no other sentiments, as to what is necessary to your justification, than ye have been taught by me: *but he that troubleth you*, and would pervert your minds from the purity of the faith, *shall* certainly *bear* [*his*] *judgment* of deserved censure here, and, if he persist in his evil, of weighty condemnation hereafter, *whosoever he be*[e]: God will judge him at last for a conduct like this, and in the mean time he has reason to apprehend my animadverting upon him with that apostolical authority which some of my adversaries have found to their cost they were unable to resist. (Compare Acts xiii. 10, 11; 1 Cor. v. 4, 5; 2 Cor. x. 6, 8; xiii. 10; and 1 Tim. i. 20.)

bleth you, shall bear *his* judgment, whosoever he be.

11 I know there are some who have insinuated, as if I myself favoured the very principles elsewhere which I so much oppose among you; *but I* leave it to you, my *brethren*,, when you consider the treatment I have met with from these zealots, to judge if the contrary do not evidently appear. For *if I yet preach* the necessity of *circumcision*, and insist upon submitting to it in order to salvation, *why do I still suffer* such grievous *persecution*, as it is evident to the whole world I endure, by the malice of the Jews, who are every where endeavouring to raise, not only prejudices, but tumults against me? *Then* surely, if it be true that I agree with them on this head, *the offence* taken at the doctrine *of* salvation by *the cross* of Christ *is ceased*; and in effect I give up that which I have been so long contending for, and they have as eagerly been struggling

11 And I brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased.

e *He that troubleth you shall bear* [*his*] *judgment, whosoever he be.*] Some think that the *apostle* here refers to *one particular man*, who was more forward than the rest, and had been chiefly instrumental in corrupting them: but by his adding at the close, *whosoever he be*, he seems to intend it as a *general* declaration; which best agrees with what follows in ver. 12, and what he elsewhere says in *this epistle*, where he speaks always of their *seducing teachers* in the *plural* number. (See chap. i. 7; iv. 17; vi. 12, 13.) And when he thus declares, that *whosoever he be* that troubleth them he *shall bear his judgment*, though some would understand this only of the *censure* which the *church* should pass upon him, or of the *punishment* he should suffer when St. Paul came to exert his *apostolical authority*, of which we have several instances elsewhere (see *note* f, on 1 Cor. iv. 21, Vol. VIII. p. 597); yet it is reasonable to extend it to the solemn *account* he should give to God, and to the *condemnation* he should certainly receive if he persisted in the endeavours he was using to subvert the truth.

SECT. ix.

12 I would they were even cut off which trouble you.

gling against. But I am so far from agreeing with them, that *I could wish they were even cut off* entirely from the communion of the Christian church, and cast out of it as unworthy members, *who* thus unsettle your minds, and *disturb you*[f], by so many false suggestions and irregular methods, as do indeed well deserve such a censure. Gal. V. 12.

13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

This might be a means of restoring to the church that peace which is so agreeable to the principles of our common religion and calling; *for* it is manifest, my *brethren, ye have been called* by the gospel *to liberty* and freedom from the bondage of the Mosaic ceremonies: *only* see to it, that ye [*abuse*] *not* this *liberty for an occasion* of unwarrantable indulgence *to* any irregular appetites of *the flesh*, as if we were set free from the observance of the moral precepts of the law; and remember that it is not only consistent with that liberty, *but* greatly subservient to it, that ye should look upon yourselves as bound, *by* the exercise of the most cordial mutual *love*, to *serve one another*. 13

14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

For all the law with which we Christians have any concern, so far as it relates to our fellow-creatures, *is fulfilled in* the observation of *one word* or precept, [*even*] *in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*, and treat him as in a change of circumstances thou wouldst reasonably expect and desire to be treated by him. 14

15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

But if, instead of cultivating these Christian and humane sentiments, *ye* indulge a fierce and savage disposition, so as to *bite and devour one another*, it will be necessary to *take heed that ye be not destroyed by one another*, as wild beasts sometimes worry one another till both are slain: at least it is certain, that by these mutual contentions you take the readiest way to disgrace, and so far as in you lies to overthrow, the religion to which you profess a regard. 15

IMPROVE-

[f] *I could wish they were even cut off who disturb you.*] It by no means agrees with the *gentle* genius of Christianity, to suppose that the *apostle* (who understood it so well, and cultivated it so much) should mean by this to intimate that he wished them *dead*, or wished that any *bodily evil* were inflicted upon them by *human* violence. All arguments therefore which are drawn from *this text* in favour of *persecuting principles* must be very inconclusive. But when we consider the *particular* circumstances in which these *seducing teachers* opposed the *apostle*, it will appear that they very well deserved that *ecclesiastical censure* which according to the *paraphrase* he here wishes to be pronounced against them.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. IX.

How awful is the supposition which the *apostle* makes, even with regard to those who had distinguished themselves by so zea-
Ver. lous a profession; to those *before whose eyes Christ had been evidently set forth as crucified* (chap. iii. 1), and who would once have been ready to *have plucked out their own eyes* for the minister that preached him to them (chap. iv. 15); that he should speak of it with regard to such as a possible case, that on the whole
2 *Christ might profit them nothing!* Let our souls dread the thought of being in the number of those to whom he shall be thus *unprofitable.*

How heavy will our account be, and how dearly shall we pay for the amusements of the sublimest knowledge, or the most sanguine hopes we entertain, if *this* be the end of all! That we may none of us be so unhappy, let us be very careful that we
4 do not think of seeking *justification by the law* in such a manner as to *fall from grace:* but as no right or title to it can be obtained
5 but by an interest in *Christ*, let us *through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness* and life, *by faith* in him. May the blessed *Spirit* of God form and support in our minds such an *hope;* which, if it be thus formed, will never *make us ashamed.* (Rom. v. 5.) Let us be therefore animated by it; and if at first
7 we have *run well*, let us always consider the dispatch we may have made already in our *Christian race*, as an excitement to farther vigour, rather than an encouragement to indolence and sloth.

Let the Spirit which these and so many other parts of the *New Testament* breathe, teach us to moderate our zeal about *circumcision and uncircumcision*, about the *rituals* and *externals* of religion, and to cultivate more and more that *faith which operates by love*, and therefore will express itself by *keeping the command-*
13 *ments of God.* This will engage us, by the best and most generous principles, *to serve one another* in our truest interests, and to fulfil that *royal law* which is comprehended *in this one* important
14 *word, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* Surely we have *not as yet attained* to perfection in this excellent grace; sure there is room for *new attainments*, even in the best. But O, how lamentably deficient are the *generality of Christians!* yea rather, how scandalously and how fatally hath the opposite principle prevailed! so that, instead of that *mutual love*, of which our gracious
15 *Redeemer* was the great teacher and example, the contrary principle of *hatred* and *malignity* hath triumphed to such a degree, as to turn *the church* into a *camp of warriors*, or rather (as it may be

be called) into a *theatre* of *wild beasts*, where they have been worrying one another almost to death, yea in many instances *biting and devouring one another*, till they have actually *been destroyed one by another*. Let us *take heed*, after all the *Christian* and the *protestant* interest hath suffered by these fatal *divisions*, that we do not catch the contagion, and bear our part in so common, yet so pernicious a mischief. It is a spreading evil, and *a little of this leaven* often diffuses itself over *the whole mass;* but nothing is more manifest than that it is *a persuasion*, which is so far from *coming of him that called us*, that it is indeed the most *direct violation* of his distinguishing precept.

SECT. IX. Ver. 8, 9

Let us remember that the time will come, when *he that troubleth the church*, either in one way, by *unscriptural impositions*, to which the *apostle* here refers, or in another, by an unreasonable *stiffness* about things *indifferent*, will certainly *bear his judgment, whosoever he be*. Let us therefore rather choose to *suffer persecution* than to share in such guilt; and be continually praying for that Divine wisdom which may teach us so to bear afflictions as not to increase *the offence of the cross*, and so to *stand fast in our liberty* as *not to abuse it for an occasion* to gratify those irregular *passions*, which, to whatever high original they may pretend, are indeed to be traced no higher than *a carnal principle*, and to be numbered among *the works of the flesh*.

10, 11, 13

SECT. X.

He exhorts the Galatians to a conversation suitable to the dispensation of grace which they had received, and warning them against the several vices of the flesh, recommends to them the habitual practice of the graces of the Spirit, and presses them in particular to purity, spirituality, and mutual love. Gal. V. 16, *to the end.*

GAL. V. 16.

THIS I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

GALATIANS V. 16.

SECT. X. Gal. V. 16.

I HAVE been cautioning you against that contentious temper which is so great a reproach to the professors of Christianity, and tends so much to the detriment of our common faith. *But*, that I may effectually guard you against this and every other evil, I have a charge to give you, and in one word *I say, Walk in the Spirit*, and at all times endeavour to conduct yourselves as under the influences of that blessed Agent and in a way agreeable to the new nature he hath given you, *and* then *ye will not fulfil the lust of the flesh;* but notwithstanding the remainders

SECT. X.

Gal. V. 16.

of corruption in you, yet by his powerful suggestions, and by the gracious aids that you receive from him, you will be happily preserved from the predominancy of carnal and irregular appetites, so that the work of mortification, and all the exercises of true godliness, will daily become more and more easy and familiar to you.

17 And this precaution is absolutely necessary in present circumstances, by reason of the continual contest that there is between the flesh and Spirit in the renewed soul: *for* while you are here in the body, *the flesh* is lusting on the one hand, and *hath desires contrary to* the motions and dictates of *the Spirit*[a], or of that gracious principle which is communicated by the Holy Spirit in his regenerating operations on the heart; *and*, on the other hand, *the Spirit* [*hath desires*] *contrary to* the appetites and inclinations of *the flesh*, or of that principle of corruption which is introduced by sin, and the remains of which are ready to exert their influence in the regenerate, *and these* two principles *are* directly *opposite to each other* both in their nature and their tendency; *so that*, upon the whole, *ye do not the things that ye would*, and are indeed incapable of doing them without your overbearing, either the desires of animal nature, or the nobler dictates of an enlightened and sanctified Spirit. Now surely you may easily judge, since one of these must be opposed, and one only can be pleased and pursued, to which of them the preference is to be given.

17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

18 *But*, for your encouragement to a wise and happy

18 But if ye be led by

a *The flesh hath desires contrary to the Spirit.*] As it is plain that by the *flesh*, which is the same with what the *apostle* elsewhere calls *the body of sin* and *the old man* (Rom. vi. 6), we are to understand that *natural corruption* and depravity which is the ruling principle in a state of nature, and has so far infected all the faculties of man, that even the regenerate are troubled still with the remainders of it, and find it working in the motions of *indwelling sin* within them: so by *the Spirit*, which is here set in opposition to it, and is elsewhere expressed by *the new man* that is put on by such as are *renewed in the spirit of their mind* (Eph. iv. 23, 24), we are to understand that *supernatural principle of grace* which is imparted from above to the renewed soul, to overcome the passions of the carnal mind, to set us free from the dominion of our lusts, and to inspire us with a love to holiness; which Divine and heavenly principle being communicated to us by *the Holy Spirit*, has frequently the title of *the Spirit* given to it, as it is plainly the effect and fruit of it; for *that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit* (John iii. 6).—And there is such a *contrariety* in these *two principles*, that they are continually opposing one another in their desires and tendency, *so that* (as the *apostle* adds) *ye do not the thing that ye would* (for so it is expressed in the *original*, and not, *ye cannot do*, &c.): ye do them not without doing violence to the opposite principle that would be drawing you another way; which is agreeable to what the *apostle* elsewhere says, Rom. vii. 19, *For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not that I do.*

b *The*

by the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

py choice, you will, I hope, always remember, that *if ye be led by the Spirit* of God in the paths of evangelical holiness and obedience, and act according to that new and spiritual nature he has formed in you, in the prevailing bent and tenor of your lives, *ye are not* then *under* the condemning sentence of *the law*, but are in consequence of this entitled to every benefit and privilege of the gospel. SECT. X. Gal. V. 18.

19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these:* Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

And a farther argument will arise from considering the different tendency of these principles, and the effects or fruits of which they are productive, on the one hand and on the other. *Now*, as to the former part of the view, *the works of the flesh are* very obvious and *manifest*[b], *which are* such as [*these:*] *Adultery*, a crime to be considered as in the first rank of enormities, as tending so directly to embitter conjugal life, and to introduce confusion and ruin into families; *fornication*, which, how light soever heathens may make of it, is in the sight of God a very grievous offence; as all *uncleanness* and immodesty of behaviour, and all *lasciviousness* in every kind and act of it, must also be, though fools who make a mock of sin mention these things in sport rather than with detestation. 19

20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations,

Idolatry likewise proceeds from this corrupt principle, as it inclines men to choose some sensible object for their devotions, and often such an one as may patronize their most irregular passions. From hence is also *witchcraft*[c], whereby desperate wretches are led to attempt an express association with infernal spirits, in order 20

b *The works of the flesh are manifest.*] As some of the *fruits* which are here specified seem to consist in errors of the *mind*, and others are the product of an evil disposition of *spirit*, it has been thought not easy to perceive with what propriety they are called *works of the flesh*; and Dr. Whitby offers several considerations to account for it. But if *the flesh* be taken (as it appears from hence it should be) for that *natural corruption* which in the *note* before is said to have infected all the faculties of man, and so extends to all the powers of the *mind* as well as to the appetites of the *body*, there is no difficulty in ascribing each of the particulars here enumerated to *the flesh*, as it is evident they all proceed from *that corruption*, by means of which *even the mind and conscience is defiled.* Tit. i. 15.

c *Witchcraft.*] I know some would render the word φαρμακεια *poisoning*; but I think it is with justice Mr. Leigh has observed, that this is comprehended under the word *murders*; nor is there any reason to believe *the flesh* so particularly inclined to this *one kind of murder*, as to give reason for specifying it rather than any other. It is certain that, on account of the *drugs* made use of in some supposed *magical compositions*, this word is often used to express those practices in which *combinations with invisible malignant powers*, were believed and intended, to which (whether they had, or had not, that real foundation which has generally been believed) it is well known the Gentiles, even in the most learned nations, were very much addicted, as Mr. Weston has shewn at large in the 7th chapter of his late learned treatise on *the Rejection of Christian Miracles.*

d *Divisions*

SECT. X.

Gal. V. 20.

order to gratify that malignant disposition of mind which excites and arms them against those who are regarded by them with an evil eye: and to the same original are owing implacable and bitter *enmities*, outrageous *strifes*, and quarrels, inordinate *transports* of ill-placed and ill-proportioned *zeal*, deep *resentments* treasured up in the mind, clamorous *contentions* vented with eagerness and obstinately carried on, together with the keen *divisions of a party spirit* [d], among those who ought to be united in one interest and affection: yea, sometimes these ill principles proceed so far as to produce seditions in the state, and *heresies* also in religious communities [e], by which professing Christians are induced to separate from each other, and to form sects, who, instead of maintaining true candour and benevolence, renounce and con-

21 demn each other. To this corrupt source we are also to trace the many *envyings* which are so commonly to be seen against the prosperity and success of others; and sometimes *murders* too, contrived and perpetrated by those whose passions and interests clash to such a degree, that nothing less than the destruction of the antagonist can appease the rage; and, to complete the catalogue, all kinds of irregular self-indulgence, and particularly *drunkenness*, that sinks a man into a beast, and those disorderly and gluttonous *revellings* [f], by which the rational

emulations, wrath, strife seditions, heresies,

21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings; and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things, shall

[d] *Divisions of a party spirit.*] We render διχοστασιαι *seditions*; but as that rather expresses a *state crime*, and the original word seems more general, I choose to express it by a *periphrasis*, sufficiently distinguishable from the other evils here mentioned, and tending naturally towards those *heresies* mentioned in the next article, as I understand it: yet, as *seditions* in the state are great evils, and the word διχοστασιαι may express dispositions leading to them, I introduce the mention of them into the *paraphrase*.

[e] *Heresies.*] The proper signification of *heresies* here seems to be what I have briefly expressed in the *paraphrase*, and I must beg leave to refer to what Mr. Hallet has written upon this subject, as containing the reasons which have determined me to prefer it; for this is by no means a proper place to discuss a subject so much controverted. Yet I doubt not but *heresies*, in the ecclesiastical sense, as distinguished from what I take to be the scriptural, may generally be said to be *works of the flesh*; as bad inclinations of mind naturally lead to bad opinions, and to a haughty and factious manner of obtruding them upon others.

[f] *Revellings.*] Κωμοι, or *revellings*, among the Greeks (as Mr. Locke observes) were "a disorderly spending of the night in feasting, with a licentious indulging to wine, good cheer, music, dancing, &c." and in this sense the word is explained by Hesychius and Suidas. We meet with it but twice elsewhere, (Rom. xiii. 13; and 1 Pet. iv. 3.) and in both places it is joined, as here, with other *riotous excesses*. But though the *heathens* were notoriously addicted to them, it is a sad evidence of the prevailing power of *corruption*, and it were well the consequences of it were more laid to heart, that among those who bear the name of Christians, any should make it a *diversion* to resemble them in such indulgences, and not be ashamed of running to the *same excess of riot*.

[g] *Fidelity.*]

shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

tional powers are in a great measure extinguished, or at least rendered incapable of performing their offices in a proper manner. These, *and such like*, are the works of the flesh; *concerning which I* now solemnly *forewarn you, as I have also formerly declared* for your security when I was present with you, *that they who practise such things*, whatever zeal they may pretend for the externals of religion in any of the forms of it, *shall not inherit the kingdom of God*, or be admitted to the possession of it; and are indeed so far from having any title to be numbered among Christians, that they shall soon be disowned, and turned out of that place which they have no right to hold in the church, with just infamy and detestation.

SECT. X.

Gal. V. 21.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

Such, I say, are the fruits and tendencies of the flesh: *but the* blessed *fruit of the Spirit*, in those who are governed by that gracious principle which is derived from him, *is* something quite of a different nature; for this, wherever it hath impregnated the mind, produces the amiable dispositions of undissembled *love* and holy *joy*, of universal benevolence of heart, and of that cheerful temper which is naturally connected with it: it engages us to cultivate *peace* with all men; and where we meet with injuries and provocations from any, to bear them with much *long-suffering*, before we enter into any contentions about them: it forms us to *gentleness* in the whole of our conduct, and inspires a tender care that we may not, by any thing rough and overbearing, grieve and injure before we are aware: it excites us to such acts of generous *goodness* as our own circumstances may afford, and those of our neighbour require: it is also the Spirit of truth as well as of love, and leads us most strictly to observe *fidelity*[g], or good faith and uprightness, in all our dealings, neither in any instance imposing upon others, nor failing in any of those engagements which it is in 22

g *Fidelity.*] It is observed in note a, on Mat. xxiii. 23, Vol. VII p. 222, that the word πιστις has undoubtedly this signification in many places. So we may understand it of the faithfulness of God, or his *fidelity* to his promises, Rom. iii. 3. and where it is applied to *servants* we expressly render it *fidelity*. Tit. ii. 10. And though it generally signifies the grace of *faith*, or *the confidence reposed in another*, yet where we find it joined, as in the place before us, with other *moral virtues*, it may be rather taken to denote *fidelity*. See Mat. xxiii. 23; 1 Tim. iv. 12; vi. 11; 2 Tim. ii. 22; iii. 10; and Rev. ii. 19.

SECT. X.

Gal. V. 23.

in our power to fulfil: It teaches us *meekness*, even when we are obliged to reprove others or otherwise to animadvert upon them for their faults; and, with regard to the government of our corporeal appetites, it dictates the strictest *temperance*, that we may neither exceed in the quantity nor the kind of our food, or in any other indulgence of animal nature. These, as you plainly see, are most excellent dispositions, and *against such* [*things*] as these *there is no law*; they have so manifest and evident a goodness in them, that they never were forbidden by any human institutions; and those who in the general course of their lives practise them, under the influence of this Spirit, shall by the grace of the gospel be delivered from the condemning sentence of the Divine law.

23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

24 *And* this is now, upon the whole, the character of all true Christians; for *they who* indeed *are Christ's*, they who have received his Spirit, and whom he will finally own as belonging to him, *have crucified the flesh with* all [*its*] irregular *passions and desires*, and doomed it to a slow and painful, but to a certain death; as if, like one that is crucified, the body of sin were fastened to the cross, and left to expire upon it; and this they do, out of love to the memory of their crucified Lord, by a continual regard to whom they are animated strenuously to persevere in so self-denying a resolution.

24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.

25 *If* therefore *we* profess to *live in the Spirit* [h], if we profess to be members of the Christian church, and to have that inward principle of Divine life which is produced by the Spirit, and continually subsists on communications from him *let us also* make it our constant care, in consistency with such a profession, to *walk in the Spirit*, in a regular and orderly manner, taking every step according to rule and under his influence. And after all our care, as it is only by his grace that we are what we are, *let us not be vain-glorious*, or conceited of our own endowments or performances; *provoking one another* to mutual ill usage by a contemptuous carriage

25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

26 Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

h *If we live in the Spirit.*] Mr. Howe insists largely on the *energy* of this phrase, *living in the Spirit*, as expressing in terms nearly resembling those in Acts xvii. 28, our *continual dependance on its influences*; and also illustrates the significancy of the word στοιχωμεν in the latter clause of the verse, as explained in the *paraphrase*. See *Howe on the Spirit*, Vol. I. p. 237.

riage towards any whom we consider as beneath us, or secretly *envying one another* for any imagined or real advantage which our brother may possess and we desire: but rather, with an unaffected humility and true benevolence of heart, let us rejoice in the happiness of others, and endeavour to promote it to the utmost of our power. SECT. X. Gal. V. 26.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us learn to consider this our mortal life as *a state of warfare* in which we are to be always struggling with *enemies*, with whom we are never to make either peace or truce; and since while we dwell in the body we shall still find *the flesh lusting against the Spirit*, let it be our constant concern, that the desires of *the flesh* may be opposed and mortified, and that the interests of *the Spirit* may be more and more advanced. And though the *contrariety* is such between them, that we *cannot* completely and continually *do the things which we would*, let us in the main *be led by the Spirit*, and give up our rational and governing powers more and more to its holy dictates, that we may *not fulfil the lusts of the flesh*; and though it still continues to solicit and disturb us, *sin* shall be kept from reigning in us. Ver. 17, 18, 16

We see what *the works of the flesh* are; which, if we really *belong to Christ*, we shall resolutely bind and *crucify, with its affections and lusts*. Let us endeavour more and more to subdue them, and learn (as it were) to use *the instruments of his death* most effectually to accomplish *the death of sin*; bringing *the old man* to be *crucified with him* (Rom. vi. 6), and *nailing it* to that *cross* to which *he hath nailed* that *decree of death* which in consequence of sin lay *against us*. (Col. ii. 14.) 24

In opposition to that cursed train of irregular and malignant affections which are here described as *the works of the flesh* (the continued indulgence of which is absolutely inconsistent with our hope of *inheriting the kingdom of God*), let us cultivate those amiable dispositions of mind *against which there is no law*: and may the Spirit of *love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness*, the Spirit of *faith, meekness*, and *temperance*, work them more and more in our souls! 19, 20 20, 21 22, 23

How vain are the cares of the generality of men to adorn their *bodies*, to improve their *estates*, to advance their *rank*; while their *minds* remain neglected! Yea, how vain are all cares to cultivate the *mind* with *science*, when compared with the infinitely more important care of improving it in such *habits of goodness*, whereby we shall be brought to resemble God, and be fitted for

SECT. X.

ever to enjoy him! Let this be *all our emulation*, and in this let us place *our glory*; nor let us go about to *provoke one another* to
26 any thing but this.

25 We profess to *live in the Spirit* of God, whose gracious influences are indeed *the very life* of our souls: let us make it our care also to *walk in the Spirit*, to regulate every action of our lives, every sentiment of our hearts, by a becoming regard to him; guarding solicitously against any thing that would *grieve* him, and encouraging those friendly offices of his, whereby we may be trained up in a growing *meetness* for the society of the blessed spirits above; and for *that world*, where the *flesh* shall be laid aside till all the seeds of corruption are worn out of its composition, and it be raised as *pure* as it shall be *glorious* in the image of that *Saviour* whose discipline has taught us to seek the victory over it, and whose grace enables us to obtain it.

SECT. XI.

The Apostle pursues his practical exhortations, especially enforcing mutual love, and a care of each other, with a zeal in doing good; and cautions the Galatians against thinking too favourably of their own spiritual state. Gal. VI. 1—10.

SECT. XI.

Galatians VI. 1.

I HAVE cautioned you against envy and mutual provocation; but, my *brethren*, rest not merely in a freedom from such unkind affections towards each other, but labour to be mutually useful, and that in your best interests: and *if a man be overtaken in any fault* through his own frailty, or the surprise of a temptation, *do ye who are spiritual*[a], and, having received the Spirit of God yourselves, are best fitted for such an office, endeavour to *restore such an one* and to reduce (as it were) that disjointed member, not with a rigorous severity, but *in the spirit of meekness*, gentleness, and love; *considering*

Gal. VI. 1.

Gal. VI. 1.

BRETHREN, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit

a *Ye who are spiritual.*] Dr. Whitby, and some others, understand this as a charge addressed to *ministers*, who by the *extraordinary gifts* they had received were best fitted for this work. But we know that the word *spiritual* is in the writings of St. Paul sometimes opposed to *carnal* (Rom. viii. 14; viii. 6; 1 Cor. iii. 1); and if it should be allowed here to signify such as were endowed with some *supernatural gifts*, it would not support the limitation proposed, since the *apostle* speaks of the Galatians in general as having *received the Spirit* (chap. iii. 2): I must therefore think, with Mr. Locke, that the expression here signifies such as were *eminent* for *gifts* or *graces*.

b *Con-*

rit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

ing thyself[b], whosoever thou art, *lest thou also* being still in the body, and liable to the like assaults, *shouldst be tempted*, and fall as thy brother hath done, so as on this account to stand in need of the same kind office from him which thou art now called to render to him. Be ready then in this and all other respects to *bear one another's burthens*; and let it be your care with mutual tenderness to comfort and support the weak (compare Rom. xv. 1; and 1 Thess. v. 14); accommodating yourselves to each other in the most engaging and obliging manner, that you may thus make all about you as easy and happy as you can; *and so*, instead of seeking to impose the heavy burden of the Mosaic law on others, you will *fulfil* that which is especially *the law of Christ*, even that law of love which was enjoined by him as his command, and will esteem it as your highest honour to wear that badge of mutual love by which he requires his disciples to be known; (John xiii. 34, 35; xv. 12.) And surely we may willingly receive that law from one who was himself such an unequalled example of love; and who with so gracious a sympathy bore our burdens of sorrow, and carried away the load of our guilt.

SECT. xi.

Gal. VI. 1.

2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and to fulfil the law of Christ. 2

3 For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. 3

Remember too the caution I have given you against vain-glory (chap. v. 26), and take heed of an over-weening opinion of yourselves: *for if any one think himself to be something* considerable, *when* indeed *he is nothing* like what he apprehends; and in particular, if he be so conceited of his own sufficiency as to imagine he is wise and good enough to resist any temptation that may arise, and please himself that he may glory in the applause of others as secure from danger, *he deceiveth himself*, and the worst part of the fraud falls on his own head; so that, instead of gaining from others, or securing to himself that honour which he expects and aims at, he only makes himself so much the more contemptible, and his danger is proportionable to the

b *Considering thyself.*] It is justly observed by Mr. *Blackwall (Sacr. Class.* Vol. I. p. 133, 134), that this sudden transition from the *plural* number to the *singular* adds a great deal of beauty and force to the caution: for it is as if the *apostle* should have said, "Let every particular person among you remember that he may also be in danger through his own frailty; and by thus *looking to himself* he will be induced to carry it with greater tenderness to others, and will be more disposed to pity and assist them."

SECT. XI.

the high conceit which he hath of himself. *But* to prevent so great an evil, *let every one try* and examine *his own work* by the word of God, the great rule to which all our actions and thoughts should be adjusted, and take care that it be such as God and his own conscience may approve; *and then he shall have* matter of *rejoicing* in what he finds *in himself alone, and not in* the applause he receives from *another*[c]: he shall then have a solid foundation of delight, in reflecting upon the state of his own soul, and what the grace of God has wrought in him and by him, instead of subsisting precariously and meanly on the good opinion or applause of others, who so frequently know not what it is that they commend, and are imposed upon by false appearances, so that their testimony can give but very little solid satisfaction to a mind that thinks justly and seriously. *For every one shall* finally *bear his own burden*, and shall be accountable to God, in the great day when he appears before him, for his own behaviour; so that there is but little room to be solicitous about the sentiments of others, in comparison of that care which we ought to take of our own temper and conduct.

Gal. VI. 4. 4 But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.

5 5 For every man shall bear his own burden.

6 A farther advice which I would give you is, *Let him that is taught* and instructed *in the word* and doctrine of Christianity, liberally *communicate in all good things*, according to the ability that God hath given him, *to* the support and maintenance of *him that teacheth* him; that so the mind of the teacher may not be kept in an anxious state about his own subsistence, but may with greater composure and cheerfulness attend to the cares of his sacred office.

6 Let him that is taught in the word, communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.

7 It is indeed an easy thing for interested men to find excuses for the neglect of this and other liberalities which are required by the gospel of Christ; but *be not deceived*, in this or any other respect, by the treachery of your own hearts, which

7 Be not deceived God is not mocked for

c *He shall have* matter of *rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.*] Mr. Locke thinks that the *apostle* hints here at the same thing which he expresses afterwards more fully concerning the *false teachers* (ver. 13), that what they had in view was to *glory in others*, whom they prevailed with to be *circumcised*; and so would have καυχημα to be rendered *glorying* (which is indeed the common meaning of the word), and would consider it as a caution to them to be careful of their own particular actions, that they were such as would afford them *matter of glorying in themselves*, and not vainly *in others*. But the word also signifies *rejoicing*, as *our translators* often render it elsewhere (2 Cor. i. 14; Phil. i. 26; ii. 16; Heb. iii. 6), which seems sufficiently to express the sense of it, as I have explained it in the *paraphrase*, and evidently suits the *apostle's* way of writing.

for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

which may more fatally impose upon yourselves than upon any others; for though men know not what to answer to some artful pleas which may be invented as an excuse from duty, the blessed *God*, who penetrates all hearts, as well as sees all external circumstances, *is not* to be *mocked* by these vain pretences; *for whatsoever a man soweth*, whether it be good or bad, whether he be liberal or sparing in it, *that shall he also reap* [d], and the return shall be answerable to it, both with respect to the kind and degree of it. *So that* on the one hand, *he that soweth to his flesh*, he that employs his substance, time, and thoughts, merely or chiefly in gratifying and indulging the flesh, or for the satisfaction of his own bodily necessities, conveniencies, or pleasures, *shall of the flesh reap* nothing better than *corruption*; and as the flesh itself shall soon corrupt in the grave, so will he utterly lose all the fruits of his labour and expence in its service: *but*, on the other hand, *he that soweth to the Spirit*, he that under the influences of the Spirit of God employs his capacities, abilities, and possessions, to promote the interests of religion in his own mind and in the world about him, *shall*, as the fruit of what is thus sown by the continued assistance and grace *of the Spirit*, *reap life everlasting*; when he shall leave the world, his immortal spirit shall inherit eternal glory, and whatsoever be his portion now, he shall be fully recompensed at the resurrection of the just (Luke xiv. 14), when all the hope of the sinner is perished.

SECT. xi.

Gal. VI. 7.

8 For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption: but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

8

9 And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

And, having such a prospect then before us, *let us not be weary* or discouraged, *in* all the labour and fatigue, in all the expence and difficulty of *well-doing*; *for in due season*, or in that proper time which the wisdom and goodness of God hath appointed (even when the harvest is come, for which it is best that we should now wait), *we shall reap* an abundant and ample reward, *if we do not faint*, and suffer our hands to hang down, either through sloth or fear. As long

9

10 As we have therefore

10

[d] *Be not deceived*, &c.] The *apostle* here with great propriety and force exposes the *evasions* some would make use of to excuse themselves from acts of *liberality*; by which, however they might impose on others, they would egregiously *deceive themselves*, as every circumstance lies open to an all-seeing God, and they assuredly should *reap* according as they *sowed*; a metaphor which he employs elsewhere to excite to liberality (2 Cor. ix. 6); the thought of which must silence every vain pretence that may be brought against so plain a duty, and is most admirably suited to regulate and heighten the proportion, as well as to enforce the practice of it.

SECT. XI.

long *therefore as we have opportunity*, as long as life continues, and Providence puts power in our hands, *let us* endeavour to *do good to all men*, to strangers and enemies, as well as brethren and friends, *but especially to them who are of the household of faith*, to them who are united to us in the bonds of Christian faith and love, and who on that account, as belonging to one family, and heirs of the same hope, have a peculiar claim to our regard.

Gal. VI. 10.

fore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. THESE exhortations of the *apostle* cannot be expressed in more lively terms, and it is scarce possible to represent them in clearer and plainer language. The great difficulty here, and in other such instances, is to bring *our hearts* to submit to what *our understanding* must so readily apprehend and approve. Let us earnestly pray that God would diffuse more of *his Spirit* on all professing *Christians*, that, beholding each other with undissembled and fervent *love*, every one may affectionately endeavour to ad-
1 vance the happiness of all; and, instead of severely *censuring* one another, let us endeavour *mutual reformation*, by such *exhortations* and *advices* as different circumstances may require: doing all *in the spirit of Christian meekness*, and in an humble sense of
2 *our own infirmities*. Let us pray that *the law of Christ*, the new commandment he has given us *to love one another*, may in all its extent be ever sacred to us, and that in consequence of the regard we owe to so benevolent a Master, there may be a constant readiness in us to assist each other *under every burden*, to relieve according to our ability every want, and to *do good to all as we*
10 *have opportunity*, but *especially to those of the household of faith*, who as belonging to that household, whatever their station or circumstance in life may be, ought to be dear to every member of the family.

7 Let us remember that there is *as certain a connection* between our conduct here and our state hereafter, as there is between the *kind of grain* sown and the *harvest* to be reaped from it. The
8 generality, alas, are *sowing to the flesh*, and the *harvest* to such will be shame and *corruption:* but for our parts, let us *sow to the Spirit* liberally and largely, and *have our fruit unto holiness*, that
9 we may thus inherit *everlasting life* (Rom. vi. 22). And when we are ready to *faint*, let us encourage ourselves and each other with the prospect of that blessed day, when, though *the seed-time* may be attended *with tears*, we *shall come again rejoicing, bringing our sheaves* of honour and joy *with us* (Psal. cxxvi. 5, 6). It is *in due*

due season, it is at the time God has wisely appointed, that we shall receive this *reward of grace;* let us *wait* for it, as we well may, with patience and humility. SECT. xi. Ver.

The day is coming when *every one shall bear his own burden*, 5
and each of us shall answer for *himself;* that awful day, when every one shall reap *the fruit of his own way*, and shall *receive according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad* (2 Cor. v. 10.) Let us see to it, therefore, not to *deceive ourselves* with a 3
vain imagination *that we are something, when we are nothing;* and not be satisfied to rest in the *good opinion* which *others* have of us, so as to *have our rejoicing* in them. And, whatsoever duty 4
be required of us, let us not amuse ourselves with trifling *excuses*, which never can deceive that *God* who *is not to be mocked;* but 7
let us set ourselves in earnest, ever to cultivate true *inward religion*, even *that of the heart*, in the sight of him who *searcheth it*, then will the testimony of our conscience be *a source of* joy, and we shall find that joy solid and permanent.

And if God bless the ministers of his gospel, as the instruments of bringing this joy to the soul, it will be attended with that readiness which the *apostle* requires to *communicate to them in all good things*, while, if *they* understand their character and office, 6
there will be *in them* that *moderation* of desire on the one hand, and that *zeal* and *love* for souls on the other, which will make it a thousand times more pleasant to communicate *spirituals* than to receive *temporals*, even from those who give with the most *willing mind*, and so *double the gift*, whether it be greater or less.

SECT. XII.

The Apostle concludes his epistle, with cautioning them against the attacks of Judaizing teachers, declaring the indifference of circumcision or uncircumcision, and pressing them strictly to adhere to that gospel for which he had himself suffered so much. Gal. VI. 11, *to the end.*

GAL. VI. 11.

YE see how large a letter I have written

GALATIANS VI. 11. SECT. xii.

YOU see, my brethren, *with what large letters*[a] *I have written* this epistle *to you with my own* Gal. VI. 11.

a *You see with what large letters.*] Dr. Whitby remarks in his *note* on this place, "that St. Paul never uses the word γραμμαλα when he speaks of his *epistles;* and that πηλικοις γραμμασι may therefore refer, not to the *largeness* or the length of *this epistle*, but to the *largeness* or inelegancy of *the characters* in which it was written." So too Theophylact and some others understand it, of the *apostles's* urging it as a proof of his affection for them, as it must shew he was *no ready writer*, to see *in what kind of letters* he had written to them. He might not be well versed in the *Greek characters;* or this *inaccuracy of his writing* might perhaps be owing to the *infirmity* or weakness

SECT. XII.

own hand[b], not being willing to omit this opportunity of testifying the affection and concern which I have for you, not choosing, as I mostly do on such occasions, to employ the pen of another who might be more used to the Greek character than myself.

ten unto you with mine own hand.

Gal. VI. 11.

12 The sum of all is this; that *as many as desire to make a fair appearance in the flesh*, and to set themselves off by standing up for the observance of the Jewish rites and ceremonies, *these* would *constrain you* Gentile converts *to be circumcised*, and to be subject with them to the carnal ordinances of the law, *only lest they should suffer persecution*[c], which the profession of the Christian faith would otherwise bring upon them, *for* owning their dependance for salvation, not on the law, but on *the cross of Christ*[d]; as it is plainly a regard to this which so much incenses the unbelieving Jews, and engages them to raise so many tumults against us, wherever they have an

12 As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.

weakness of his nerves, which he had hinted at before. (See note h on Gal. iv. 14, p. 278.) I have therefore altered the *translation* here, and given what appears to be the *literal sense*.

b *I have written to you with my own hand.*] This might be well considered as an argument of his more than ordinary concern for them; for it was usual with St. Paul, as we have observed elsewhere, to dictate his *epistles*, and to employ a person as an *amanuensis* to write them from his mouth: (see *note* c on Rom. xvi. 22, Vol. VIII. p. 546.) And perhaps his own *inaccuracy* in forming the *Greek characters*, which he refers to in the words before, may suggest one reason among several others for his doing it. Compare 1 Cor. xvi. 21; Col. iv. 18; 2 Thess. iii. 17; and see the *note* on this last *text*.

c *Only lest they should suffer persecution.*] This seems to open the main secret spring of that zeal for the *Jewish ceremonies*, in some that professed themselves Christians, which occasioned so much uneasiness in the *apostolic churches*. The persecuting edicts of the *Jewish sanhedrim*, the influence of which extended to remote *synagogues*, had induced many who *secretly believed in Christ* to decline an *open* acknowledgment of him (John ix. 22; xii. 42; xix. 38), which yet *our Lord* himself had so expressly required, that their consciences, during this state of *dissimulation*, must be in great anxiety. (See Mark viii. 38.) But afterwards, when a scheme arose of blending Judaism with Christianity, it may be supposed that this would abate the edge of *persecution* against those who fell in with it, and especially against those who urged the *Gentile converts* to such complete *proselytism*, though it might sharpen it against other Christians: and this might perhaps weigh more with some than they themselves were aware, in concurrence with the desire of *making disciples*, and the *prejudices of education*, which must naturally be supposed to have their share. Compare chap. v. 11.

d *For the cross of Christ.*] It is observed by Jerom on this text, "that Tiberius and Caius Cæsar made laws to authorize the Jews who were dispersed throughout the Roman empire to follow the rites of *their religion* and the ceremonies which had been transmitted to them from their fathers:" To which he adds, "that *circumcised Christians* were by the Pagans looked upon as Jews, while those who made profession of the gospel and were *uncircumcised* were violently *persecuted* both by the Jews and Pagans: on which account some early *teachers* of the church, to be delivered from the fear of *persecution*, submitted to be *circumcised* themselves, and also recommended it to their *disciples*." Both Archbishop *Tillotson* (Vol. II. p. 367), and Mons. *Saurin* (*Serm.* Vol. XI. p. 49, 50) agree in expounding *this text* with a reference to *these edicts*: but I think it best illustrated by the observation in the *preceding note*, as the *apostle* seems to speak of an attempt to *escape persecution*, not by *receiving circumcision*, but by *imposing* or *urging* it.

an opportunity of doing it; and these half Christians aim at appeasing them by a zeal to spread the Mosaic institutions among the Gentiles. This is the point they have in view, and, whatsoever they pretend, it is not any real veneration for the law that prompts them to be zealous for it; *for neither they themselves who are circumcised*, and so are solemnly obliged to observe the whole of it, shew a concern to *keep the law*, or manifest a true esteem for it as a spiritual and Divine institution; nor is it from any truly religious principle that they labour to proselyte you to it; *but they desire to have you circumcised*, to make their boast of you among the Jews; *that they may glory* in this mark fixed *in your flesh*, and may avail themselves of the many converts to Judaism, which they have the interest and address to make. SECT. XII. Gal. VI. 13.

13 For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised that they may glory in your flesh.

But, for my part, I have no such selfish worldly views, and *God forbid that I should glory*, either in my descent or circumcision, in my abilities or interest in making converts, or indeed in any thing else, *unless it be in* the regard I have been brought to pay to *the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ*, and the reliance which I have for justification on his death and sufferings; *by* the believing views of *which I* am made indifferent to all things here, and *the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world:* so that I view the world, as little impressed by all its charms as a spectator would be by any thing which had been graceful in the countenance of a crucified person when he beholds it blackened in the agonies of death; and am no more affected by the objects round me than one that is expiring would be struck with any of those prospects which his dying eyes might view from the cross on which he was suspended. And well indeed it may be expected that it should be so; *for* as to those who have truly believed *in Christ Jesus*, all things are counted loss and dung for him, the whole dependance of the soul for righteousness and life is built on him, and the whole heart centers in him; and where this is the case, *neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision* neither can the one profit, nor the other hurt, *but* [*there is*] actually *a new creation:* old things are passed away, and new views and dispositions are introduced under the regenerating influences of the Spirit of God, in consequence of which believers

14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing nor uncircumcision but a new-creature,

SECT. xii.

believers are (as it were) brought into a new world, and, being created in Christ Jesus unto good works, are formed to a life of holiness, and quickened to the exercise of that faith which operates by love. (Compare 1 Cor. vii. 19; 2 Cor. v. 17; Gal. v. 6; Eph. ii. 10; and Phil. iii. 8.) *And as many as shall walk according to this rule*, and govern themselves by such maxims, [*may*] *peace and mercy* [*be*] *upon them!* May that peace which arises from a sense of the pardoning mercy and free grace of God, ever rest upon them, *even upon the* whole *Israel of God* every where; for persons of such a character, and not the natural descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, are the true Israelites.

Gal. VI. 15.

16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace *be* on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

17 Now therefore, *for the future, let no man trouble me* with reflections on my character, or with disputes concerning the necessity of circumcision, and grieve my heart with additional sorrows, *for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus*[e]; marks of far more importance than circumcision, and on which, whatever your Judaizing teachers may think, I value myself much more; even the scars which I have received, by stripes and chains and other means, in the service of Christ, amidst the various hardships which I have borne for him, and which ought to render me venerable in the eyes of all who have a due regard to him.

17 From hence-forth let no man trouble me; for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

18 And thus, *brethren*, I conclude with my sincere and earnest prayer for you, that *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*, in all its sanctifying and comforting influences, may, [*be*] *with your spirit*, to direct you into the ways of truth and peace, of holiness and comfort. *Amen.*

18 Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 12, 13

WHAT meanness is there in those views and objects in which the generality of mankind are so apt to *glory!* How little satisfaction

e *I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.*] Dr. Potter thinks, (*Gr. Antiq.* Vol. II. p. 7) that the apostle here alludes to the Στιγμαῖα, or *brands*, with which the Greeks used to mark those that were appointed to serve in the *wars*, lest they should attempt to make their escape. (See *Lipsius, de Milit. Rom.* Lib. i. Dial. 9.) But perhaps the reference may be to those *marks* by which the *votaries* of particular *deities* were distinguished. See my *Sermons to Young Persons*, Number iv. at the beginning.——Mr. Blackwall, (in his *Sacr. Class.* Vol. II. p. 66, 67,) considers it as an allusion to an Egyptian custom, according to which any man's servant who fled to the temple of Hercules, and had the sacred *brands* or marks of that *deity* impressed upon him, was supposed to be under his immediate care and protection, and by that to be privileged from all violence and harsh treatment. And in this view he forms a large and beautiful paraphrase on this verse.

faction can there be in making *proselytes to a party*, and spread- SECT. XII.
ing forms and notions, when compared with the joy of promoting
true religion in the hearts of men, and thereby advancing the Ver.
glory of God and the salvation of immortal souls? And of what 13
service will it be to *make a fair appearance*, and to be zealous for the externals of religion, so as to gain the applause of men, and to have many followers, if at the same time we have so little veneration *for the cross of Christ as to be afraid or ashamed* of owning the necessity of relying on *his righteousness alone* for justification, *lest we should suffer persecution* upon that account, or be exposed to the *reproaches* of the world about us!

May Divine grace teach us to esteem *the cross of Christ* more 14
highly, and to *glory in nothing* but our knowledge of it, and our hopes and expectations from it! May we all feel its vital efficacy, to *crucify us to the world, and the world to us;* that we may look upon *the world* but as a dead and worthless thing, which neither can afford us any advantage, nor yield us any pleasure, to engage our hearts to choose it for our portion: and, being *crucified*, and dead to all things in it, may we be so entirely weaned from all affection to it, as not to make it any more our principal design and study to pursue it; but, being *indifferent* both to its *smiles and frowns*, as to the influence which once they had upon us, may we be neither moved by any prospect of *self-interest* on the one hand, nor terrified by the fear of *persecution* on the other!

Let us not lay the stress of our religion on the *name* we bear, 15
or ground the hope of our acceptance on being of this or that *denomination of Christians;* but let it be our chief concern to have experience of a thorough change of heart and life, and to obtain that renovation of soul, *that new creation*, without which *neither circumcision nor uncircumcision can avail any thing*, and with which the one, as well as the other, will be accepted of God.

It is the written word of God that is *the rule* we are to go by, 16
both in the doctrines and the precepts of it; let us be careful that we *walk according to it*, and regulate our principles and conduct by it; then will *God* own us as his true *Israel*, and then shall *peace and mercy be upon us.* And surely, how diligently so- 17
ever we observe *this rule*, how exactly soever we conform to it, and how much soever we may *suffer* for our adherence to it, we depend upon *mercy* for the communication of *peace*, and must 18
ascribe all our hopes of happiness to pardoning clemency and free grace. May that *grace ever be with our spirit*, to sanctify, to quicken, and to cheer us; and may we always be ready to maintain the honour of that, which is indeed our very life! *Amen.*

THE END OF THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR ON THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR,

A PARAPHRASE

ON

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO THE

EPHESIANS.

WITH

CRITICAL NOTES, AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.

A

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

THE apostle Paul is universally allowed to be the *author* of this excellent *epistle:* but Dr. Mill and others have contended that it was written, not to the church of Ephesus, but to that of Laodicea. This they would argue from some passages of this epistle, (chap. i. 15; iii. 2; and iv. 21,) which seem more suitable to persons whom he had *never seen*, which was the case of them at Laodicea, (Col. ii. 1,) than to the Ephesians, with whom he had been conversant about *three years;* Acts xx. 31. (See *note* [m] on that text, (Vol. VIII. section xlvi. p. 211.) But what is principally urged for this opinion, is the direction given by the apostle at the close of his epistle to the Colossians, (Col. iv. 16), "that they should cause the *epistle* which he wrote *to them* to be read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and they should likewise read the *epistle* from Laodicea." From whence it is inferred that the *epistle* now before us must be that which is intended there, and was originally written to the Laodiceans.

These several objections will be obviated in the *notes* upon those places on which they are grounded, and can be no sufficient warwant, in opposition to the *first verse of this epistle*, in which it is addressed expressly *to the saints at Ephesus*, to introduce an alteration in the text which hath not the authority of any single *manuscript* in being, or any *ancient version*, to support it.

We are told, indeed, it was affirmed by Marcion, an early *heretic* of the *second century*, that what is called the epistle to the Ephesians was inscribed to the Laodiceans: but he is censured upon this account by *Tertullian* *, (who wrote against him in the beginning

* *Tertull. contra Mercion.* lib. v. cap. 11, 17.

* *Basil.*

beginning of *the third century)*, as setting up *an interpolation* of his own in opposition to *the true testimony* of the church. And though *Basil* * and *Jerom* † in the latter part of *the fourth century*, speak of some *copies* in which the words εν Εφεσω were omitted, yet they allow at the same time that *this epistle* was written *to the saints at Ephesus*; whom, by a strange interpretation, in allusion to the *name* by which the Lord revealed himself, Exod. iii. 14, some would suppose, the apostle calls in a peculiar sense the *saints who are*, as being united unto *Him who is*. But this omission evidently makes but a very odd reading, unless we admit of the conjecture of *Archbishop Usher* ‡, that a void space was left after *the saints who are*,—and this might be intended for *a circular epistle* to any of the churches of the Lesser Asia, whose name might be occasionally inserted to fill up the blank.

There is however no sufficient reason for departing from the common established reading, which incribes this epistle *to the saints at Ephesus*, especially when we find in the most early times, that Ignatius, one of the apostolic fathers, (who lived at the time when this epistle was written, in the *smaller copy* of his own epistle to the Ephesians, sect. xii. speaks to them of St. Paul "as making mention of them in a whole epistle, which Cotelerius says, it is in vain to understand of any other epistle than this, and Dr. Lardner observes, must plainly mean the epistle of Paul to the Ephesians §. And in the *larger copy* of the same epistle, sect. vi. he declares to the Ephesians, "Ye are, as Paul wrote to you, "*one body and one spirit*," where it is manifest there is a reference to the very words of St. Paul in this epistle, chap. iv. 4. So that the testimony of Ignatius, is expressed in both the *copies*, which ever be received as genuine, to which indeed the *smaller* has apparently the better title. The same is also still more clear with respect to Irenæus, and Clement of Alexandria, who were both fathers of the *second century*, and have both quoted this epistle in express terms under the title of the *epistle* to the Ephesians ‖. No further testimony therefore can be needful to make it manifest that *this epistle* was received in the first ages of the church, as written by St. Paul to the Ephesians.

It is well know that Ephesus was the chief city of the *Proconsular Asia*, which was a part of what was called the *Lesser Asia*. It was particularly famous for the *temple of Diana*, a most magnificent and stately structure, which was reputed one of the seven wonders of the world: and its inhabitants were noted in their *Gentile* state for their idolatry and skill in magic, and for their luxury and lasciviousness. The apostle Paul, at his first coming to them in the *year of our Lord* 51, according to his usual custom, preached to the Jews there in their synagogue, many of whom were settled in that city and the neighbouring parts: but, as he then was hastening to the passover at Jerusalem, he only spent *one*

* *Basil. adv. Eunom*, lib. ii. p. 733.
† *Hieron. Comment. in Ephesus. init*
‡ *Usher Annal. ad.* A. C. LXIV. p. 686.
§ *Lardn. Credibil.* part ii. Vol. I. p. 157.
‖ *Iren.* lib. v. cap. 2. § 3. & *Clem. Alex. Strom.* lib. iv. p. 409.

one sabbath there, and left them with a promise to *return to them again*, (Acts xviii. 19—21.) Accordingly he came again to Ephesus the following year, (Acts xix. 1, & *seq.*) and preached the word with such success, and wrought such extraordinary miracles among them, that a numerous church was formed there, chiefly made up of *Gentile converts*, whose piety and zeal were so remarkable, that many of them, in abhorrence of *the curious arts* which they had used, *burnt their magical books* to a great value; (Acts xix. 19.) And such was the concern of the apostle for their spiritual advantage, that he did not leave them till the *year* 57, when he had been about *three years* among them; (Acts xx. 31.) After this he spent some time in Macedonia and Achaia, and in his return to Jerusalem in the *year* 58, he sent for *the elders of the church* of Ephesus to Miletus, and most affectionately took his leave of them, as one that should *see them no more*; appealing to them with what faithfulness he had discharged his ministry among them, and solemnly exhorting them to *look well to the flock* committed to their care, lest they should be corrupted by *seducing teachers*, who would arise among themselves, and artfully endeavour to pervert them; (Acts xx. 17, *to the end.*) And we see afterwards, from the *coolness* and *declension* they are charged with in the *epistle* to the *angel of the church* of Ephesus (Rev. ii. 4, 5), how just and seasonable was this caution that he gave them at his parting from them.

From what the apostle says of himself in *this epistle*, it appears that it was *written by him* while he was *a prisoner* (chap. iii. 1; iv. 1; vi. 20); as he was likewise when he wrote to the Colossians; (Col. iv. 18.) And there is such a manifest correspondence between these two epistles, both in their subject-matter, and in the very form of the expressions, that it may justly be concluded they were written *at the same time*, and sent together by Tychicus; who was intrusted with the care of both (Eph. vi. 21, 22; and Col. iv. 7, 8), but was attended by Onesimus when he delivered that to the Colossians (Col. iv. 9). Now, as it is not to be thought the apostle Paul would have employed Onesimus in such a service till after he had been with his master Philemon, it appears highly probable from hence, that the apostle sent him first with his epistle to Philemon, by whom he was received (agreeably to his request) *not as a servant, but as a brother* (Philem. ver. 16), and had his freedom given him; and, from the *confidence* the apostle had *in the obedience* of Philemon, and in his readiness to *do even more than he said* (ver. 21), he might well take this opportunity of his going with Tychicus to recommend Onesimus to the Colossians, by joining him in his message to that church. Since then the apostle was in expectation of being *soon released* from his confinement when he wrote to Philemon, and trusting he should shortly visit him, desires him to *prepare a lodging for him* (ver. 22), this may induce us to conclude that he wrote *that epistle* towards the close of his *first imprisonment* at Rome: and as the *epistles* to the Ephesians and Colossians appear to have been sent at the same

time with *that to Philemon*, it may be inferred that he wrote these not long before, and sent them all together in the *year of our Lord* 63, which was the 9th of the Emperor Nero. (See Vol. VIII. sect. lx. *note* [g], p. 305.)

The *design* of the apostle Paul in this epistle (the former part of which is *doctrinal*, and the latter *practical*) was "to establish the Ephesians in the *faith*; and to this end, to give them more exalted views of the eternal love of God, and of the glorious excellence and dignity of Christ; to shew them they were *saved by grace*, and, howsoever wretched they were once, the Gentiles now have equal privileges with the Jews; to encourage them, by declaring with what stedfastness he *suffered* for the truth, and with what earnestness he *prayed* for their establishment and perseverance in it; and finally, in consequence of their profession, to engage them to the *practice* of those duties that became their character as Christians."

The *doctrinal* part of this epistle is contained in the *three first chapters:* in which the apostle introduces several important *truths* for the instruction of the Ephesians in the great *doctrines* of the gospel, that they might be well grounded in the *faith;* and, for the encouragement of the Gentile converts, acquaints them with the *Christian privileges* to which they were entitled. And here,

I. After saluting the Ephesians with an acknowledgment of their *faith* (chap. i. 1, 2), the apostle testifies his *thankfulness* to God for his distinguishing *love* and favour to them, in calling them to be partakers of the blessings of the gospel, in consequence of *his eternal purpose* to glorify his grace in their sanctification and salvation, through the blood of *his Son* and the communication of *his Spirit;* (ver. 3—14.)

II. He assures them of the fervency of his *prayers* for them, that they might have a clearer *knowledge* of the great objects of their hope and expectation; and, from an experimental sense of *the exceeding greatness of the power of God*, might have a fixed regard to the supreme authority and dignity of Christ, who by that power is *raised from the dead*, and exalted to be *Head over all things to the church;* (ver. 15, *to the end.*).

III. To magnify the riches of *Divine grace*, and to affect them with a more grateful sense of their obligations to it, the apostle leads them to reflect upon that *wretched state* of *moral death* in which the gospel found them; and shews them it was owing to the *rich mercy* and the *great love of God* that they were *raised in Christ* from death to life, and in the whole of their salvation it was evident that they were *saved by grace*, and *not by works*, or any righteousness of their own; (chap. ii. 1—10.)

IV. He represents the *happy change* that was thus made in their condition; that they who once were *aliens from the commonwealth of Israel*, and *afar off from God*, were now received *into his church*, and had an equal right to *all the privileges* of it with the Jewish converts; *the middle wall of partition* having been *broken down by Christ* in favour of the believing Gentiles, who being *reconciled*

conciled to God were *no more strangers* as they had been formerly, but were *united in one body* under Christ the common Head of all believers, and, being animated by *one Spirit*, and built upon the *same foundation*, were made *an holy temple in the Lord;* (ver. 11, *to the end.)*

V. To encourage and confirm the Gentile converts in their adherence to the gospel, and recommend it more to their regard, the apostle in the strongest terms expresses the sense he had of the *Divine goodness* in appointing him to be *the apostle of the Gentiles*, and authorising him to *preach among them the unsearchable riches of Christ;* and declares how great an *honour* he esteemed it to be employed in making known *the calling of the Gentiles* to be *joint-heirs* with the Jews in all the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom, though he had suffered greatly for it, and was now *in bonds* on this account; (chap. iii. 1—12.) And then,

VI. He entreats them not to be discouraged at the *sufferings* he underwent for his regard to the Gentiles, but rather to consider it as an *honour to them*, that in the stedfastness with which he suffered, they had such a confirmation of the truth of his doctrine, and of the sincerity of his concern for their spiritual advantage; in proof of which he closes this part of his epistle with a most affectionate and earnest *prayer* for their establishment in the *Christian faith*, and their advancement in the knowledge and experience of the *love of Christ*, of which he speaks in the most lofty and exalted terms as far surpassing all conception, concluding in the warmth of his devotion with a grand and suitable *doxology;* (ver. 13, *to the end.*) And now,

The other part of this epistle, which is *practical*, is contained in the *three remaining chapters:* in which the apostle gives them several weighty exhortations and *advices*, for the direction of their lives and manners, that they might be regular in their *practice;* and tells them of the *Christian duties* that were required of them, to which the consideration of their *privileges* should engage them, pointing out to them the means and motives that were proper to promote the observance of them, and urging the great care and caution they should use to behave suitably to the profession which they made and to the character they bore. And here,

I. The apostle, from the consideration of his own *sufferings*, as well as of the many important respects in which all true Christians are united, after a general exhortation to them to *walk worthy* of the excellency of *their calling*, particularly urges them to *mutual forbearance* and *unity of Spirit*, as being joined together in *one church*, and called to partake of the *same privileges* in Christ, without distinction either of Jew or Gentile: and, as a powerful inducement to their cultivating such a disposition, he represents the glorious foundation which Christ as the great *Head of the church* has laid for it in the variety of *gifts and graces* he has bestowed, and in the sacred *offices* he has appointed; which being all derived from the same *Spirit*, and designed for the same end, were all to be employed for the advancement of his interest and

kingdom, and for the better edification of the whole church, till *in the unity of the faith* they should *grow up* into *one perfect body* under *Christ their Head;* and and so must have a tendency to promote their present *union*, and to inspire them with the most endearing *affection* to each other; (chap. iv. 1—16.)

II. He presses them, as having *learned Christ*, and been enlightened by the gospel, to shew the *difference* there was between them and the unconverted Gentiles, by an unspotted *purity* and *holiness* of behaviour, and *not to walk* like those from whom they were so happily distinguished by *knowledge and grace;* and cautions them in particular against *lying*, excess of *anger*, and *stealing*, and that *corrupt communication* to which the heathens were notoriously addicted, but which were inconsistent with the character of Christians, and grievous to the *Holy Spirit:* (ver. 17—30.)

III. He further cautions them against *all malice*, and urges them to *mutual love* and *readiness to forgive*, in consideration of the *Divine compassions* manifested in the gospel; and then pursues his exhortations to abstain from all *inordinate desires*, and from all manner of *uncleanness* and immodesty, as well in *words* as *actions;* in which, however they had shamefully indulged themselves in the *darkness* of *heathenism*, the *light* of Christianity displayed them in such odious colours as plainly shewed them to be unbecoming their profession, and no way reconcileable with the obligation they were under to *walk as children of the light;* (ver. 31, *to the end;* and chap. v. 1—14.)

IV. He recommends it to them, in consideration of their character and circumstances, to be *prudent* and *circumspect* in their whole conversation, as those who were instructed in the *will of God;* and not to seek for pleasure in a dissolute *excess*, but, guarding against all *intemperance*, to make it the delightful business of their lives to express their *gratitude* to God, under the influences of his *Spirit*, by praising him for all his mercies in pious and devout *thanksgivings;* and while they were thus careful of their *duty to God*, he also urges them not to be negligent of the *duties* which they owed *to one another* as members of *society*, but to behave with due *submission to each other* in their several stations; (ver. 15—21.) And then,

V. Having hinted at the *relative duties* of society in general, he descends to particulars, and, beginning with the duties of *husbands and wives*, he recommends it to *husbands* to *love their wives*, in imitation of the *love* which *Christ* bears to the *church*, and presses upon *wives* the correspondent duty of *conjugal subjection*, in imitation of the *subjection* which the *church* pays to Christ the Head of it; (ver. 22, *to the end*) From whence he passes on to the *mutual duties* of *children and parents*, and of *servants and masters*, giving suitable admonitions to each, and adding proper arguments to enforce them; (chap. vi. 1—9.) And after this, for a conclusion of the whole,

VI. He gives a general *exhortation* to them all, of whatever condition or relation in life, to prepare for a strenuous *combat* with their

their *spiritual enemies*, by putting on *the whole armour of God*, and living in the exercise of those *Christian graces* that were necessary for their defence and safety: and having among other things exhorted them to fervency in *prayer*, he particularly recommends *himself* to their *remembrance* at the throne of grace, that he might carry on the important work in which he was engaged with freedom and fidelity, whatever he might *suffer* for it; and, leaving it to Tychicus (by whom he sent this *epistle*) more fully to inform them of every circumstance relating to him, he closes his *epistle* with an *apostolical benediction*, not only to themselves, but to *all that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity*; (ver. 10, *to the end.*)

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO THE

EPHESIANS.

SECTION I.

The apostle Paul begins the epistle with testifying, in the strongest terms, his joy that the believing Ephesians were called to the participation of Christian privileges in consequence of God's eternal purpose of glorifying his grace in their sanctification and salvation, through the blood of his Son, and the communication of his Spirit. Eph. I. 1—14.

EPHES. I. 1.
PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:

EPHESIANS I. 1.

PAUL, who hath the honour to be *an apostle of* the Lord *Jesus Christ*, sent forth with a special commission from him to publish his gospel and attest his resurrection to the world, and set apart to this important office *by the* sovereign and gracious *will of God*, who hath interposed in so extraordinary a manner to form him for it and to employ him in it, addresseth this epistle *to the saints who are at Ephesus, even to the faithful in Christ Jesus*[a], who believe in him as the only Saviour, and in consequence of their persuasion of the truth of his gospel, are solemnly and

SECT. i.

Ephes. I. 1.

a *To the faithful in Christ Jesus.*] Some have understood this as an intimation that the Christians at Ephesus were remarkably *faithful to Christ* in relying on him alone for salvation, without that attachment to the *Mosaic law* which was to be found in some other churches, and particularly among the Galatians, But as he uses the *same title* when addressing the Colossians, (Col. i. 2,) whom yet he reproves on this very account, (Col. ii. 16, 20,) I can lay no stress upon that criticism.

b *Blessed*

SECT. i.

and truly devoted to the service of God. This is the character in which he looks upon you, and with the most affectionate concern and value for you, it is his ardent wish and most sincere and hearty prayer, that the richest abundance of Divine *grace* and favour may [*be*] communicated *to you*, with all the happiness *and peace* attending it, *from God our Father*, who is the great original of all desirable blessings, *and* [*from*] *the Lord Jesus Christ*, through whom they flow down to us sinful creatures.

Ephes. I. 2.

2 Grace *be* to you, and peace from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 At the first turning of my thoughts towards you as converts to the gospel, when I set myself to think of the happy state into which you are brought, as true believers in the Son of God, by this glorious dispensation of Divine grace, with whatever personal sorrows and afflictions I may be pressed, I cannot forbear bursting out into songs of praise. Join with me therefore, my dear Christian brethren, and let us all say from our hearts, *Blessed* [*be*] *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ* [b], *who* is now through him become our God and Father, and *hath blessed us* [c], even all that are partakers of his grace, whether Jews or Gentiles, *with every spiritual blessing in heavenly things in Christ* [d], having graciously bestowed

3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ:

b *Blessed be the God and Father*, &c.] The *length of periods* frequently occurring in the writings of St. Paul is one thing in his *style* that contributes much to the *obscurity* of it; of which *this sentence*, which runs on through *twelve verses* to the end of this *section*, is a remarkable instance. But in the *paraphrase* it is absolutely necessary to break it into many, or otherwise the *period* would be drawn out to a much more inconvenient *length*, and the words added to illustrate particular clauses would encumber, deform, and obscure the whole.—I have been obliged to take the same method in many other places, and hope I need make no farther apology for doing it.

c *Hath blessed us.*] It is evident that the *apostle* means in the word [*us*] to include the Ephesians to whom he wrote, the greatest part of whom were *Gentile converts*, as sharing with *him* and the *Jewish Christians* in their evangelical privileges: and by thus beginning his *epistle* with ascribing thanks to God for his mercies to *them*, he at once declares his firm persuasion of the *calling of the Gentiles*, and his hearty joy in it.

d *With every spiritual blessing in heavenly* [*things*] *in Christ.* The *apostle* every where represents the *graces of the Spirit* as so much preferable to its *gifts*, that it appears very surprising that Dr. Whitby should expound the blessings here intended as referring entirely to those *gifts*. They manifestly take in *every spiritual blessing* (for so it is expressed in the *original*, εν παση ευλογια πνευματικη,) and principally must refer, not to extraordinary and miraculous *gifts*, but to the sanctifying and saving *graces* of the Spirit; such as effectual calling, justification by grace, the adoption of children, the illumination of the Spirit, and *all the graces* of the Christian life, which are common unto all believers, and are communicated to them in all their several branches. And these are blessings *in the heavenlies*, εν τοις επουρανιοις or *in heavenly things* as I would choose to render it, rather than *places*,) as they are *things* that have a manifest relation and respect to *heaven*, and have a tendency to fit us for it, and to lead us, not to seek after the enjoyments of this present world, but to be conversant about, and to be waiting for, those of the heavenly state.

e *Hath*

bestowed upon us, in him, and for his sake, by the operation of his Holy Spirit, whatever may conduce to the happiness of our souls now, whatever may prepare them for eternal glory, and may seal to us the joyful hope and expectation of it. SECT. i. Ephes. I. 3.

4 According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love:

Now this is all to be considered, not as what we can pretend to have deserved, but as the result of his free grace, and the accomplishment of his eternal purpose of love concerning us, *according as he hath chosen us in him*[e], even in his well-beloved Son, *before the foundation of the world* was laid; always intending *that we should be* in all respects *holy and unblameable before him*, and especially that we should walk *in love*[f], that by the exercise of this sacred affection to God and each other, we might be preserved from the evils which abound in the world, and animated to the most worthy, honourable and useful behaviour. To this we know God hath appointed us; let us therefore, in proportion to the degree in which we find this temper prevailing 4

5 Having predestinated 5

e *Hath chosen us in him.*] I think the *apostle* here cannot be understood to intimate that *every one* of the persons who belonged to the church of the Ephesians (or elsewhere to other *Christian societies,*) in the bonds of external communion, was by a *particular decree* of God *personally chosen* to eternal life, and to persevering holiness as the way to it. For he could have no evidence that this was the case with regard to each, without such a *revelation* as I think none have pretended, and as would very ill agree with other passages relating to the *apostasy* of some who once made a very forward profession, and with the many exhortations and cautions which every where occur in his writings, or with the declarations Christ had made concerning the final ruin that would in fact attend many who called themselves Christians, and some who bore the highest *offices* in the church, and wrought the most *extraordinary works.* (Compare Mat. vii. 22, 23; and Luke xiii. 26, 27.) I conclude therefore, that he speaks of *whole societies* in general as consisting of *saints* and *believers*, because this was the *predominant* character, and he had reason in the judgment of charity to believe *the greater part* were such (compare Phil. i. 7). Nor did he always judge it necessary to make *exceptions* in reference to a few *hypocrites* who crept in among them, any more than Christ judged it so to speak of Judas as excluded, when he mentions the *twelve thrones* of judgment on which the *apostles* should sit (Mat. xix. 28.) In this view he says of them in general, that whether they were Jews or Gentiles they were indiscriminately *chosen*, not only to those present privileges which they all as professing Christians enjoyed, but to real holiness and everlasting glory. And, as we are sure there were at Ephesus many Jewish converts who were in full communion with the church, I can see no reason at all, with some commentators of great name, to limit what the *apostle* says here to the Gentiles. An address to them alone in this epistle would very little suit that candour and love so prevalent in the heart of St. Paul, and so essential to every true Christian. The pious professor Franckius thinks the *apostle* speaks *only of the Jews* till he comes to the 13th verse; but from *note* h below, on ver. 9, it will appear that he must be mistaken in this singularity of interpretation.

f *In love.*] This is often insisted upon; and perhaps the rather, to intimate that, now *the middle wall of partition* was *broken down*, it was of the highest importance to cultivate *mutual affection* without any regard to the singularity of the Jewish or Gentile character.

g *In*

SECT. i.

ing in us, look back with delight to those gracious purposes which the blessed God formed in his own all-comprehending mind concerning us long before we had a being; and let us contemplate and rejoice in him, as *having predestinated us to the adoption of children*, and fore-ordained us to be received into his family *by Jesus Christ*, in whom he has chosen us for a peculiar people *unto himself*, and thereby entitled us, not only to the most valuable privileges by which his church on earth is distinguished, but to an inheritance of eternal glory. And surely when we compare so happy a state and hope with our own temper, character, and deserts, we must acknowledge our appointment to it to have been *according to the good pleasure of his will*, and ascribe it entirely to the overflowings of his mercy.

Ephes. I. 5.

nated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

6 May we therefore ever acknowledge it *to the praise of his glorious grace*, which we can never sufficiently admire, and which the whole world should concur to magnify and adore; even that grace, *wherein he hath made us accepted*, and hath regarded us as the object of his favour and complacency, *in the* Lord Jesus Christ, as his first and best *beloved* Son; through whom, though in ourselves we are so unworthy of it, we have
7 received the adoption; And *in whom we have redemption* from the power of sin, the tyranny of Satan, and the final wrath and displeasure of God, *through* the pouring forth of *his blood* upon the cross, when he undertook the great and awful work of making an atonement for us by the sacrifice of himself: for by this precious stream it is, as flowing from his wounded side, *the* full and free *remission of* all our most numerous and aggravated *sins* is happily conveyed unto us on our believing in him, *according to the* inexhaustible *riches of his grace*, which reaches even beyond the extent of all our most heinous transgressions, and where our guilt had risen to the most fearful height hath its superior tri-
8 umphs. *In* the displays of *which* grace, we must also acknowledge that *he hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence*[g]; having with infinite wisdom contrived a way to glorify all

6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved:

7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

8 Wherein he hath abounded towards us in all

g *In all wisdom and prudence.*] To understand this as a very celebrated *commentator* does, of *their own prudent returns* to be made to the Divine goodness, seems a sense much below the *apostle's* meaning.

h *The*

all wisdom and prudence, all his attributes in the salvation of men, even those which seemed to have the most different claims, dispensing mercy in a way of judgment, and awakening an humble awe and reverence in the soul by the very method which is used for granting pardon and peace. SECT. i

Ephes. i. 8.

9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

All these admirable and gracious purposes 9 hath God been pleased to unite, and to discover in the way of our salvation; *having made known unto us*, by the revelation of that gospel of which I have the honour and happiness of being an apostle, *the* long concealed *mystery of his will*[h], *according to his* own sovereign *good pleasure* and free grace, *which he had before purposed in himself*, even the important design of gathering to himself, out of all nations, Jews and Gentiles, one holy and glorious church.

10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, *even* in him:

This was his 10 grand design, which all his other dispensations of providence and grace in former ages were intended more properly to introduce; *that in the economy of the fulness of the times*, or when that time was fully come which he in his wise appointment and distribution of things had judged most suitable and eligible, *he might reunite under one head all things in Christ*, whom he hath constituted sovereign of angels and men and of all his dominions and subjects, *both which are in heaven, and which are on earth*[i], that for his glory and the good of the whole society he should with supreme authority preside over all.

11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated:

And thus in Christ hath he united all things, [*even*] *in him* who is the Head of all; 11 *in whom also we have obtained an inheritance*[k], and

h *The mystery of his will.*] It is so called, as *having long been kept a secret*, of which neither Jews nor Gentiles had any conception till it was revealed by the Holy Spirit to the *apostles*. I think this plainly proves that Professor Franckius is mistaken in referring the word [*us*] to the Jews; for the *mystery* of *calling the Gentiles* was not for a considerable time *made known* to the converted Jews, and when it was declared by the *apostles*, it was difficult for them fully to submit to it.

i *Both in heaven and on earth.*] This is considered by some as a Jewish phrase to express *the whole world*; and Mr. Locke thinks it may be equivalent to Jews and Gentiles (compare Dan. viii. 10.) But it seems more reasonable to understand it of bringing *angels* as well as *men* under the government of Christ. (Compare Col. i. 16, 20; Eph. iii. 10; Phil. ii. 10.) The word ανακεφαλαιωσθαι must, in its most literal signification, express *uniting again under one Head.* Both *angels* and *men* were at first in sweet and harmonious *subjection* to the *Son of God*, the great Creator of both; but *man* having broke himself off from the society, the *Son of man* by his humiliation and sufferings *recovers all* who believe in him, and in his human nature *presides over the kingdom* to which in the world of glory *they* and his *angels* belong. This interpretation presents so noble a view, that no other will bear a comparison.

k *We have obtained an inheritance.*] Mr. Locke would render εκληρωθημεν, *are become his inheritance* (alluding to Deut. xxxii. 9, *The Lord's portion is his people, Jacob*

SECT. i.

and the hope of complete and everlasting felicity; *having been* graciously *predestinated* to it *according to the purpose of him, who* by an efficacious, though gentle and often imperceptible, influence, *worketh all things agreeably to the counsel of his own will*[l]; and, having formed all his schemes with infinite wisdom, takes the most sure and suitable means to execute them, and to subdue in the minds of men, as he has subdued in mine, the strongest prejudices against them.

Ephes. I. 11.

destinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

12 And not I alone, but all who of Jews are become believers in Christ, must acknowledge this to have been the case, and must consider it as laying us under the highest obligations, *that we should be* entirely devoted *to the praise of his glory*, and to the purposes of his service for ever; even we, *who first trusted in* the power and promise of *Christ*[m] for salvation, and many of us ventured our souls upon him, when his name was unknown to the Gentile nations, and to most of our own countrymen was the object of contempt and abhorrence.

12 That we should be to the praise of his glory who first trusted in Christ.

13 The powerful efficacy of the same grace hath likewise been displayed in you, and hath given you a title to the same inheritance in Christ; *in whom ye also*, who were once sinners of the Gentiles, even ye Ephesians, who were particularly devoted to idolatry and superstition (compare Acts xix. 19, 35), to a degree which distinguished you from many of your heathen neighbours, [*trusted*] and believed as we had done, *when ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation*, which brings the good tidings of salvation to you as well as others, and gives

13 In whom ye also *trusted* after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after

Jacob is the lot of his inheritance); and interprets it as referring to the admission of the Gentiles into the *church*, which is *God's heritage:* but, as [*we*] in *this* and the *next* verse seems opposed to [*you*] in the *thirteenth*, it must signify the Jews who *first trusted in Christ*, or the body of the *Christian church*, who were incorporated long before the Ephesians were brought into it.

l *Who worketh all things agreeably to the counsel of his own will.*] This does indeed express God's taking such methods to answer his purposes as he knows will in fact be successful. But it does not prove any thing like an *overbearing impulse* on men's minds to determine them in such a manner as to destroy the *natural freedom* of their volitions, and so to prevent their being justly *accountable* to God for such actions.

m *Who first trusted in Christ.*] I think it strange that Mr. Locke should urge this as an argument to prove that the *apostle* speaks of the Gentiles; since it is so evident that the grand harvest of believing Jews was gathered into the *church* before Christ was preached to any of the Gentiles. To interpret the word προηλπικοτας as signifying that they *first began to hope in Christ*, or had *first entertained hope* through him, whereas before they had *no hope* (Eph. ii. 12), loses the force of the expression, and sinks the sense of the Greek language.

n *The*

after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

gives the most convincing demonstration of your being called to share in all the blessings that are bestowed in Christ: *in whom also, having believed* and made profession of your faith, *ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise*, descending upon you, not only in miraculous gifts, but in its sanctifying graces, to attest that you belong to the family of God, and are heirs of the promises made to Abraham and his seed. I speak of that blessed and gracious Spirit *who is the earnest of our inheritance*[n], in whom you have a certain pledge and token of your being by special adoption entitled to it, to encourage and animate you under all the difficulties of your way, while you continue waiting *till* you receive *the* complete *redemption of the* people he hath so dearly *purchased* for his *possession*[o]: to them he hath promised everlasting life and happiness, and he will certainly bestow it upon them in the day of his final appearance, which will at length open with a lustre that shall fully repay so long an expectation, and will abundantly conduce *to the praise of his glory*, or to the illustration of that wisdom and love which hath wrought in every previous dispensation, to lead on by the properest degrees towards that most illustrious one which was to close the whole.

SECT. i.

Ephes. 1. 13.

14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

14

IMPROVEMENT.

ARE we not by Divine grace and mercy *partakers of those blessings* which *Paul* here celebrates with so much delight, and in the review of which, familiar as they were to his thoughts and discourses, he breaks forth as it were into a rapturous *anthem* in

Ver. 3

n *The earnest of our inheritance.*] It seems very unnatural to explain this as Mr. Locke does, of *our being God's inheritance*, for the *earnest* must certainly refer to *future blessings*, and be intended as a pledge and token of our right and title to them.

o *Till the redemption of the purchased possession.*] Dr. Whitby would render this clause, εις απολυτρωσιν της περιποιησεως, *till the redemption of life:* and brings many texts out of the *Septuagint*, where περιποιεω signifies to *save alive*. To illustrate this he observes, there are two *redemptions* or grand *deliverances* (for that is plainly his idea of *redemption*); the one, that of *justification*, consequent upon believing; the other, that by which we are delivered from *death*, and all the other penal consequences of sin, in *the redemption of the body* from corruption that it may partake of eternal life. (Compare Rom. viii. 23.) This nearly coincides with Beza's interpretation, who would translate it, *till the redemption of vindication*, that is, till we are set entirely at liberty, and receive complete deliverance and salvation. But I rather conclude that περιποιησις here signifies *the people* whom Christ has *purchased* to be *his peculiar property*; which is very agreeable to the signification of the word elsewhere. Compare Mal. iii. 17, *Sept. tuag.* (where it answers to סגלה, *Segullah.*) Acts xx. 28; 1 Tim. iii. 13; and 1 Pet. ii. 9.

SECT. i.

in the very beginning of this *epistle*, as he likewise does in so many others? Ought not our hearts to be as warm in such devout acknowledgments? Are *spiritual blessings in heavenly things* or *places in Christ Jesus* less valuable now than they were *seventeen hundred* years ago? Are not the *necessities* of our souls *the same?* Is not their immortality the same? Let us then join with the most grateful sentiments in the *acclamation;* and, in proportion to the degree in which we feel the *importance* of what God
Ver. hath already done, and is doing for our souls, let us go back with
4 unutterable pleasure to the *gracious purpose* which he was pleased to form in his own compassionate breast, when he *chose us in Christ*
5 *before the foundation of the world*, when he *predestinated us through him to the adoption of children.* Let us acknowledge the freedom
11 of his grace in it, that we are thus *predestinated according to the purpose of him who*, with proper regard to the nature of his intelligent and free creatures, *worketh all things agreeably to the good*
6 *pleasure of his will*, and *maketh us accepted in the Beloved*, that we may be *to the praise of the glory of his grace.*

8 Let these united displays of *wisdom* and *love* affect our hearts; for he hath indeed *abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence.* And let that *holiness* which mingles its glories in the whole scheme be also remembered. Let it never be forgotten that we
4 are predestinated to *be holy and without blame before him in love*, that we might attain to that blameless temper which *love* alone can inspire and support.

9 For this purpose *the mystery of his will is made known to us*, and that grand illustrious plan is displayed, which is so well wor-
10 thy of all the perfections of a God; even his design to *gather together all things in one in Christ*, to unite all good and happy spirits under him *as the common Head*, and to make him the bond of their *eternal union* to God and to each other. What are *we* sinful creatures, that we should be received into such an *association?* Let us never forget it *on earth*, as we shall for ever commemorate it *in heaven*, that it is *through his blood that we have re-*
7 *demption;* eternal redemption, which he who has begun the happy work will certainly complete, in favour of those whom he hath
14 *purchased* to be an everlasting *possession* unto himself.

15 In the mean time, may *his Spirit* be given us as the *seal of the promises*, and the *earnest of our inheritance!* And by more abundant communications of his sanctifying influences, may he raise our souls to a blessed anticipation of those enjoyments which will endure for ever, and will be for ever new and delightful.

SECT.

SECT. II.

The Apostle assures the Ephesians of the fervency with which he was offering his prayers to God on their account, that they might have still higher and worthier conceptions of the gospel, and of its glorious Author as raised from the dead, and exalted to supreme dominion in the heavenly world. Eph. I. 15, *to the end.*

EPHES. I. 15.

WHEREFORE I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,

EPHESIANS I. 15.

SECT. ii.

I HAVE mentioned the invaluable blessings of which as Christians we have the privilege to be partakers, whether Jews or Gentiles; and *for this cause*, knowing the extensive views on which the Christian church is formed, in the affectionate remembrance which I have of all the faithful, *I also* bear you on my heart, both in the praises and the prayers which I offer up to God; *having* in this my confinement *heard of* your stedfastness in *the faith you have in the Lord Jesus*[a], whom we adore as our common Saviour, *and of the love* [*you bear*] *to all the saints*, whether circumcised or uncircumcised: On which account I *cease not* daily *to give thanks for you*, that you are brought by Divine grace into this happy state, and am *making mention of you* always *in my prayers*, which I am continually presenting to heaven for my brethren in every place.

Ephes. I. 15.

16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

16

And it is my constant request for you, *that the God* and Father *of our Lord Jesus Christ*, who is also *the Father of glory*, of which he is eternally and immutably possessed, from whom all glory proceeds, and to whom it returns, *would give you* more abundant supplies of *the spirit of wisdom and revelation*, to fill you with a more enlarged knowledge of his will, and animate you

17 That [the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him:

17

a *Having heard of the faith you have, &c.* ακουσας την καθ' υμας πιστιν.] Some have argued from hence, that this *epistle*, if directed to the Ephesians, must have been written before Paul's long abode at Ephesus, since he would not have spoken of *their faith* as only known *by report*, if he had for *two years* and *an half* been conversant with them, and seen the effects of it. To this some have *answered*, by pleading that ακουω signifies, not only *to hear*, but *to understand*, by whatever means the knowledge be attained; and others have said that this *epistle* was intended, not only for the church of Ephesus but for other Asian churches in the neighbourhood. But perhaps the easiest and most solid *answer* is, that as it was now *five* or *six years* since Paul quitted Ephesus, he might judge it proper thus to express his complacency on *hearing* that they *continued*, in the midst of so many circumstances of temptation, to behave in a manner so worthy what he had personally observed among them. In this sense Mr. Locke understands these words; and it is illustrated by comparing Phil. i. 3, 27; and 1 Thess. i. 5, 6; iii. 6.

b *The*

SECT. ii.

Ephes. I. 18.

you to the further exercise of every grace *in the acknowledgment of him:* And in particular, that by his influence and teaching he [*would give you*] to have *the eyes of your understanding enlightened* still more and more [b]; *that*, being thus illuminated, *ye may know*, in a more comprehensive manner than you now do, *what is the* great and important *hope of his calling*, what are the high conceptions you should have of that excellent Object which the gospel proposes to your pursuit, and with what certainty and delight you should look forward to it, and may discern more fully what are the inexpressible advantages, *and what the glorious riches* and inestimable treasures, *of his inheritance in the saints*, which he distributes with so liberal a hand among them in the blessings of his grace at present, in consequence of having adopted them to himself, and which hereafter they shall possess in perfect happiness and glory, and shall for ever enjoy with him and with each other:

18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

19 *And* that you may be thus more thoroughly sensible *what* [*is*] *the exceeding greatness of his power* which he hath manifested in the operations of his grace *towards us who* cordially *believe* his gospel, *according to the energy of the power of his might* [c], influencing our hearts in such a manner, as effectually to conquer all our prejudices against Christianity, and against true religion in every form.

19 And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power;

20 This is indeed a power, like that which is the confirmation of our faith, as being the authentic seal of the gospel, set to it by that energy *which he exerted in* his Son Jesus *Christ*, when he lay a cold and mangled corpse in the sepulchre, *in raising him from the dead*, and thus declaring him to be the Son of God with power (Rom. i. 4); *and* by which too he *seated* [*him*] *at his own right-hand in heavenly* [*places*], in the possession of the highest dignity and glory;

20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him om the dead, and set m at his own right-nd in the heavenly ces.

Having

b *The eyes of your understanding enlightened.*] Our *translation* here, though it express the sense, departs from the construction of the *origina'* in which these words are in the *accusat case*, πεφωτισμενους, &c. and appear to be g erned by the *verb* δωη in the preceding verse. And therefore, to preserve the same construction, I have repeated here the words [*would give you*], which are inserted as a supplement.

c *The exceeding greatness of his power*, &c.] The admirable beauty of this passage, and the strong *emphasis* and force of the expressions in the *original*, are well set forth by Bishop *Pearson (on the Creed*, p. 519), as scarcely to be paralleled in any author, and superior to what our language can reach. See also *Blackwall's Sacred Classics*, Vol. I. p. 307.

d *The*

SECT. ii.

Ephes. I. 21.

21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

Having exalted him *far above all* the ranks in the angelic world, even above every *principality and power, and might, and dominion*, however they are distinguished in the celestial hierarchy, *and* above *every name*, how honourable soever, *that is named*, or had in any account, *not only in this world, but also in that which is to come;* so that there never has been, and never shall be, among all the inhabitants of heaven or earth, any one so dear and excellent, so high and honourable, in the sight of God as he is. And it is delightful to pursue the meditation; reflecting farther, that the Divine power hath not only invested our ascended Saviour with supreme dignity, but likewise with universal authority; *and hath subjected all things* whatsoever *under his feet*, that he may over-rule and manage them as he will, *and given him* [*to be*] supreme *Head over all things to the church*, for its protection, benefit, and advantage: Even that church *which is his body*, and which as such is ever dear and precious to him, and, being made complete in him, is regarded as *the fulness of him who filleth all* persons *in all* places[d] with all kind of good things which they possess, and yet delights in this as his chosen dwelling, even as an holy temple which he hath consecrated to himself.

22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him *to be* the Head over all things to the church,

22

23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

23

IMPROVEMENT.

FAITH in Christ, and love to all the saints, are here with great propriety put by the *apostle* for the *whole* of a *Christian temper*. May they be more apparent and operative in all who call themselves by the *Christian name!* Even a firm and active *faith*, a warm and unbounded *love*, which shall *forget* every thing that would alienate our hearts from our brethren; and *only remember*, that they are *saints*, *consecrated* to God, and *sanctified* by him; that they are *believers in Christ Jesus*, and therefore *one* with him, *who is our Head*, and our All; whose *love* hath given *to us*, and to *them*, whatever is lovely in either; who will save *the whole body*, and make it so happy *together*, that the very thought of *that happiness*

Ver. 15

22

d *The fulness of him who filleth all in all.*] Mr. Locke understands this as if it were said, *which is completed*, or completely filled *by him*, &c. and I think the *texts* he refers to in confirmation of this sense are of great weight, and have *paraphrased* the text accordingly; though it is certain that the word πληρωμα has sometimes another sense; as when we are said to *receive from Christ's fulness*, John i. 16, and Christ is declared to have *all the fulness of Deity dwelling in him*. Col. ii. 9.

SECT. II.

happiness should cause our hearts to overflow with every *benevolent affection*, as well as with perpetual *gratitude*, to our Divine Deliverer, who is the source of it.

Ver.

Let us learn by this excellent and pathetic *prayer* of the *apostle* what are the most important *petitions* we can offer for ourselves and our Christian friends. Surely *this* must be numbered among
18 them, that *the eyes of our understandings may be enlightened* more and more, that so we may more clearly and affectionately know *what is the* great and glorious *hope* which our *Christian calling* sets before us. Alas, as yet we *know but little* of it! but little of that great and *glorious inheritance* which God will divide *among his saints*, and in the enjoyment of which he will for ever *unite* them all. But adored be his *grace* if we *so know it* as deliberately to make *choice* of it, as to *give up* every interest and hope inconsistent with it, and determinately to say, *This is our rest, we have desired it;* (Psal. cxxxii. 14.)

19, 20 *He who hath wrought us to the self-same thing, is God;* (2 Cor. v. 5.) It is indeed an exertion of *a Divine power*, that *quickened* these *dead souls* of ours; the same, that *quickened* the *dead body* of our Redeemer, quickened, exalted, and glorified him. Let *our souls*, like that of the *apostle*, presently take the hint, and *soar upward*, as with an *eagle's*, or rather an *angel's* wing; *soar* to those glorious abodes, where he *sits at the right-hand of God, far*
21 *above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named.* There he reigns, not only as the sovereign Guardian of the universe, but in the more endearing cha-
22, 23 racter of the *Head of the church*, bearing the same tender affection to it, exerting the same care over it, as the *head* over the *members;* calling *the church*, narrow as its boundaries seem, *his fulness*, though he *fills all in all.*

"*Blessed Lord!* Fill our souls more and more with all the graces of *thy Spirit*, and extend the boundaries of the *church* all abroad! Unite us in these dearest bonds; and give us always to act worthy of *that honour* which thou conferrest upon us, when thou callest us *thy body, thy flesh, and thy bones!*" (Eph. v. 30.)

SECT.

SECT. III.

Farther to excite the gratitude of the Ephesians, the Apostle leads them back to that state of moral death in which the gospel found them, and reminds them how entirely they were saved by Divine grace. Eph. II. 1—10.

EPHES. II. 1.
AND you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins.

EPHESIANS II. 1.
SECT. iii.

UNSPEAKABLE, my brethren, is the happiness of the body of Christ, which I have just been mentioning, the happiness of all who are related to him as their glorious Head: *and* through Divine grace this happiness is yours; for *you*, though once sinners of the Gentiles, [*hath he*] who raised up Christ from the dead [*quickened*] and raised to life[a], by the effectual working of that mighty power which I have shewn you to have wrought in Christ; even you, *who* will (as I persuade myself) most readily acknowledge, that you long *were dead in trespasses and sins*, incapable of any sensations and actions arising from that spiritual and Divine life to which his grace has now awakened you, and liable, as the just desert and consequence of your sins, to a sentence of eternal death. Such, it is manifest, was your wretched state, while you continued in the paths of vanity and guilt, *in which ye formerly walked* with pleasure[b], *according to the course* and manner *of this* present *world*, in a conformity to the common usage of the age in which you live, and to the fashionable enormities of your heathen neighbours; a course so detestably evil, that I may properly say of it, that

Ephes. II. 1.

2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince

2

a *You hath he quickened.*] Some have observed that the *connection* here is *harsh*, the words [*hath he quickened*] not being in the *original*, and would therefore suppose the *accusative case* υμας (as the *grammarians* call it) to be governed by the *verb* πεπληρωκε understood, answering to the close of the *preceding chapter*; and thus would take the sense to be, "He who *filleth all his members* with all gifts and virtues, hath also *filled you* among the rest." But the words υμας ονλας νεκρους in the *first verse*, so directly answer to ημας ονλας νεκρους in the *fifth*, that I think it very plain both must refer to συνεζωοποιησε, *he hath quickened together with Christ.* This is one instance, among others, of Paul's beginning a sentence and then throwing in a very long *parenthesis*, and taking up again at a considerable distance the words with which he began, or nearly the same. Compare Eph. iii. 1, 14, with chap. iv. 1; and 1 Tim. i. 3, with ver. 18.

b *In which ye formerly walked.*] Dr. *Goodwin* very pertinently observes here, that the Ephesians were remarkable, in the midst of all their *learning*, for a most *abandoned character*. They banished Hermodorus merely for his *virtue*, thereby in effect making a *law* that every modest and temperate man should leave them. See Dr. *Goodwin's Works*, Vol. I. p. 7.

c *The*

SECT. iii.

Ephes. II. 2.

that it was just *according to* the desire, instigation, and will, of *the prince of the power of the air*[c], that wicked spirit who commands the legions of fallen angels, that by Divine permission range in the air, and fly from place to place in pursuit of their pernicious purpose of corrupting and destroying mankind. I say it again, your course was formerly according to the dictates and suggestions of that cursed and malignant spirit, who by his influence on the hearts of men has in effect the management, however unseen and unapprehended *of the spirit that now operates powerfully in the children of disobedience*[d], and prejudices their darkened minds against admitting the evidence and authority of the gospel.

prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.

3 *Amongst whom also we all had formerly*, at least in some degree, *our* course of life and *conversation*[e], whatever our education or religious profession might have been; walking in many instances *in the* unbridled *lusts of our flesh*, to the base appetites of which we were enslaved, so as to forget the true dignity and happiness of a rational and immortal spirit. Thus we went on, *fulfilling the dictates of the flesh, and of the* inordinate *passions*[f] of the carnal mind, as if we had been altogether destitute of any superior power

3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the

c *The prince of the power of the air.*] This refers to a *Jewish tradition* that the air was inhabited by *evil spirits*; a notion which, as Mr. Mede observes (*Diat.* on 2 Pet. ii. 4), the apostle Paul seems to approve.

d *Of the spirit that now operates powerfully in the children of disobedience.*] I render it [*of the spirit*], as this agrees better with the construction of the *original* κατα τον αρχοντα—του πνευματος, &c. which leads us to refer this latter clause to the prevailing influence of Satan over the *vicious spirit* or *corrupt disposition* that is so powerful in sinners, which is thus represented as *subject to his management*, and actuated by him.—The phrase ενεργουντος εν τοις υιοις της απειθειας, is very strong and emphatical, both in the denomination it gives to the *heathen* as *children of rebellion* and obstinacy, who would *yield to no persuasion* that would urge them to a better course of life, as the *etymology* of απειθεια imports; and in the forcible manner in which it expresses the influence of Satan over them, as if they were inspired and *possessed* by him; for it is well known the word ενεργουμενοι among the *ancients* signified the same with *demoniacs*.

e *We all had formerly our conversation.*] The *apostle*, changing the expression from [*ye*] *Ephesians* to [*we*], seems plainly to declare that he meant to include *himself* and *all other Christians* in what he here says: and it is so professedly the design of the beginning of his *epistle* to the Romans to prove that the Jews had not, in point of *justification*, any advantage above the Gentiles (Rom. iii. 9), that it is surprising to me that some very learned and ingenious writers, and Mr. Locke in particular, should contend so strongly for the contrary. As to the argument from Eph. iv. 17—20, see the *paraphrase* and *notes* there, in the beginning of sect. viii.

f *The dictates of the flesh and of the passions.*] The word θελημαλα, here made use of, expresses a kind of *dictatorial* power; and the *plural* διανοιων, which we render *mind*, as it cannot here signify its *intellectual powers*, must, I think, denote the various *passions*, according to the prevalence of which *our minds* take as it were *different* colours and forms, and become strangely different from themselves.

g *Were*

Ephes. II. 3.

the flesh, and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

power to controul them; *and* howsoever we might pride ourselves in any distinction of birth or separation by peculiar privileges from the rest of the world, we *were* indeed *by nature*, and according to the bias we were naturally under, *the children of wrath*[g], and heirs of the curse denounced on sin, *even as others* round us are: we too, as well as they, were born in sin, and, in consequence of that innate corruption, were early plunged in actual transgressions, and so brought under a sentence of death and destruction by that law which every soul of us had in various instances violated.

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

This was the common calamity in which we were all involved; *but* the blessed *God being rich in mercy*, and finding the motives of it in himself when there was nothing in us but misery to move him to it, *according to his great* and free *love wherewith he hath loved us*, hath been pleased to look upon us with pity, and to contrive a most astonishing and effectual way for our recovery from this deplorable state: And in prosecution of it, *even when we were*, as I had before observed, *dead in trespasses* and sins[h], he *hath quickened* and enlivened *us together with Christ*[i], having constituted by his grace such a near relation between us, that his renewed life should be the source of ours: for it is *by* that *grace*, which

4

5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved;)

5

g *Were by nature the children of wrath.*] Some think the meaning of this phrase is only that we were so *truly and indeed.* Compare Gal. iv. 8. (See *Limborch. Theo.* lib. iii. cap. 4, § 17.) But, on the whole, I think it much more reasonable to refer it to the *original apostacy* and corruption, in consequence of which men do, according to the course of *nature*, fall early into *personal guilt*, and so become obnoxious to the Divine displeasure. And [*we all,*] in the beginning of this verse, is so plainly opposed to [*ye*] in the *verse before*, that it is astonishing Dr. Whitby should maintain that [*we*] and [*ye*] are used promiscuously throughout this whole discourse. *Monsier Le Clerc*, (*Ars Crit.* p. 104.) brings many instances from ancient writers to prove that φυσει signifies *genius* or *disposition*; but I think I may venture to say that every one of them signifies a *natural* disposition, and not merely an *acquired* habit.

h *When we were dead in trespasses* and sins.] What is said in Col. ii. 13, does indeed shew that this was *eminently* the case, of the Gentiles; but I have given my reasons above why I think it here to be spoken of what *all in general* were till the grace of God wrought for their recovery.

i *Hath quickened us together with Christ.*] This does not merely signify our being *raised* to the *hope* of pardon and glory by the *resurrection* and *ascension* of Christ; but seems to refer to that *union* which there is between him and all true believers, by virtue of which they may look on *his resurrection, ascension*, and *glory*, as a *pledge* and *security* of something quite of a *similar nature* to be accomplished in due time in and upon *them*. Thus we are taught to consider Christ as a *public person*, the elder brother of the family, and the guardian of the younger branches of it, who may, by a very easy and beautiful *figure*, be said to have *received their inheritance in him.*—It is justly observed by Mr. Locke, that chap. i. 20. and ii. 5, 6. answer to each other; but the *apostle's* mind being filled with these grand ideas, and transported with love to Christ, lets his pen run loose to enlarge upon them, though with some interruption to the natural construction.

SECT. iii.

which is bestowed in him, that *ye are saved*, and made partakers of these invaluable privileges. *And* in consequence of this I may farther say, that he *hath raised* [*us*] *up together* in him, as our Head and Representative; *and* by admitting him into heaven as a forerunner, to take possession of those glorious mansions for us, he hath *made* [*us*] *sit together in* those *heavenly* [*places*] to which he is exalted, and into which we also may be said to be admitted *in Christ Jesus:* for by means of that relation between him and us which Divine grace hath established, we may look upon his resurrection and exaltation to the right-hand of God, as the certain pledge and security of ours; and regarding him under the character of a public person, who is thus raised and exalted in our name, we may be said to share in those felicities and dignities which are conferred on him.

Ephes. II. 6.

6 And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus;

7 And this God hath done, *that he might shew in the ages to come* under the dispensation of the gospel, and might display to all succeeding generations, *the exceeding riches of his* free and unmerited *grace*, as manifested both to Jews and Gentiles *in* [*his*] *kindness towards us in Christ Jesus:* for we have received it all by him, and are partakers of it as connected with him, whom God hath appointed a Head and Saviour to us, and taught us to regard him as our great Repre-
8 sentative. I repeat it again and again, that I may properly inculcate a doctrine of so great importance: *for* I would never have any of you forget, that it is *by* this free *grace*, which I have so frequently celebrated, and would for ever celebrate, that *ye are* brought into the happy number of the *saved* ones, and are delivered from that ruin into which sin hath plunged you, and raised to these glorious hopes of eternal felicity; which inestimable privileges we receive *through* such a cordial *faith* in Christ, as is productive of unfeigned love and obedience: *and* the grace of God appears, not only in constituting this method of salvation through faith, but also in producing this great and Divine principle in our souls; for *this* very faith is *not of yourselves* [k], it is

7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in *his* kindness towards us, through Christ Jesus:

8 For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves;

k *By grace ye are saved through faith; and this not of yourselves.*] It is observable, that the *apostle* speaks of these Christians not only as in the way to salvation, but as already *saved* (σεσωσμενοι,) by a strong and lively *figure* expressing their happy

selves; *it is* the gift of God:

is not of your own production, there being such a natural averseness to it in the heart, as that we neither can be said to have wrought it, nor is any praise resulting from it, or any excellence in it, to be ultimately ascribed to us; but [*it is*] really *the gift of God*, who by the gracious influences of his Spirit fixes our attention to the great objects of it, subdues our prejudices against it, awakens holy affections in our souls, and, on the whole, enables us to believe, and to persevere in believing, till we receive the great end of our faith in the complete salvation of our souls.

SECT. iii.

Ephes. II. 8.

9 Not of works, lest any man should boast:

10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained,

9 And God hath appointed, that salvation should be thus obtained, by that faith which he produces in the heart, and *not by works* of the Mosaic law, or any other obedience of our own, *lest any one should boast*, as if he had by his own righteousness obtained salvation, and so should ascribe the glory of it to himself rather than to God. But it cannot be so now; *for* as all acts of acceptable obedience proceed from faith and this faith is wrought in our hearts by the gracious influence of the Divine Spirit, it is most evident that *we are* to acknowledge ourselves to be *his workmanship*, so far as there is any thing in us agreeable to the nature and will of God; being *created in Christ Jesus unto good works*, and made able not only to perform them, but to delight in them; even those works of evangelical obedience, *to* the performance of *which* (though we obtain the forgiveness of our sins previous to our performing them, on our accepting Christ and believing the grace of the gospel) *God hath before prepared* [*us*] by the influences of his Spirit[1]; having fore-ordained and

9 10

happy security.—Some explain the following clause [*and this not of yourselves*], as if it were only a repetition of what was said before, that the *constitution* that made *faith* the way to salvation was not of *their own* appointment, but Gods. But this is making the *apostle* guilty of a flat *tautology*, for which there is no occasion. Taking the clause as we explain it, that is, as asserting the *agency* of Divine *grace*, in the production of *faith*, as well as in the constitution of the method of *salvation by it*, the thought rises with great spirit. As for the *apostle's* using the word τοῦτο in the *neuter gender* to signify *faith*, the thing he had just before been speaking of, there are so many *similar instances* to be found in *scripture*, that one would wonder how it were possible for any judicious *critics* to have laid so much stress on this as they do, in rejecting what seems beyond all comparison the weightiest and most natural interpretation. Compare the *original* of the following *texts*, Phil. i. 28; Eph. vi. 18; Gal. iii. 17; iv. 19. And for the like construction in other *Greek authors* of undoubted credit, see *Elsner. Observ.* Vol. I. p. 128; and *Raphel. Annot. ex Herod.* p. 186.

1 *To which God hath before prepared us.*] This

SECT. iii.

Ephes. II. 10.

and appointed in his eternal counsels, and in the declarations of his word, *that we should* diligently and constantly *walk in them*, as ever we would approve ourselves his people, and stand entitled to the promised blessings of the future state, which indeed we can no otherwise in the nature of things be prepared to receive.

dained, that we should walk in them.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. LET us behold with a becoming attention, and with all those emotions of heart which an attentive review of it is capable of exciting, the *amazing diversity of these states* as represented by the *apostle;* and remember that they are *states*, in the one or the other of which *we all are.* We see what *nature* and the *first Adam* have made us; and we see what *grace* and an interest in the *second* would make us.

1 Daily *observation*, and, in too many instances our own *experience*, may have convinced us, that it is not the character of the *Gentiles* alone to be *dead in tresspasses and sins.* It shews us, that
2 to *walk according to the general course of this* apostate *world*, is to walk *according to the prince of the power of the air;* who, when he is most set on our ruin, is most importunate in persuading us to *fulfil the desires of the flesh and of the mind.*

Still, alas! till the gospel reaches and renews the heart, doth
3 the same *evil spirit*, by means of the corrupt and vicious *spirit* dwelling in them, *work in the children of disobedience and wrath*, in which number we must acknowledge ourselves *by nature* to have been. But blessed be God, that *grace* has its superior triumph over *depraved nature;* and *where sin hath abounded, grace doth much more abound;* (Rom. v. 20.)

4 The *mercy of God* is *rich*, and his *love* is *great*; and his power-
5, 6 ful *grace*, to which we must ascribe all our hope of salvation, hath *quickened us when we were dead in sins*, and hath *enlivened us with Christ*, to whom by *faith* we are united, and so *incorporated* with him, that in consequence of it we may not only consider *his resurrection and ascension to glory* as an *emblem*, but in some degree as an *anticipation*, of our own, and may think and speak of ourselves as *raised*, and *exalted*, and *glorified*, with him.

O how blessed and joyful a view is this! and how powerfully ought it to operate upon us, to *elevate* our minds above this low world

This is plainly the sense of the *original*, οἷς προητοίμασεν, which shews, that as we are *chosen to be holy*, (chap. i. 4,) and called to perform *good works*, (Tit. iii. 8,) so also God *prepares us for*, and enables us to, it by his grace.

a *Called*

world, and to *animate* us to every great and generous sentiment and pursuit! Surely this must illustrate, if any thing can do it, the *riches* and freedom of that *grace by which we are saved,* and must engage *the generations to come* to celebrate his *exceeding kindness* towards us. Let all *boasting in ourselves* therefore be entirely given up: let *salvation by faith* be acknowledged to be *of grace;* and that *faith* itself be acknowledged as *the gift of God,* whose *workmanship we are,* and by whom we are *created* to that noble and only acceptable principle of *good works.* Let not *this grace be received in vain;* but let us answer the purposes of this *new nature* and *new life* which God hath graciously given us, and *shew forth the praises of him* from whom it is derived, and *in whom,* in a spiritual as well as a natural sense, *we live, and move, and exist.*

SECT. iii. Ver. 7, 8, 9, 10

SECT. IV.

The Apostle farther pursues the argument begun in the last section, as representing the happy state into which they were now brought, as united to the church of God, and partakers of all its privileges; the middle wall of partition being now removed in favour of believing Gentiles. Eph. II. 11, *to the end.*

Ephes. II. 11. WHEREFORE remember that ye *being* in time passed Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which

Ephesians II. 11.

SECT. iv. Ephes. II. 11.

YOU have heard of the glorious privileges to which as Christians you are exalted, out of that wretched state of moral death in which the gospel found you: *wherefore* let me seriously urge it upon you, that you would always *remember* and bear it in mind how happy a change God hath been pleased by his sovereign grace to make in your state, and would consider what you now are in comparison with what you formerly were. O let it never be forgotten, *that ye* [*were*] *formerly* ignorant, vicious, and idolatrous *Gentiles,* and *in* a state wherein *the flesh* was continually leading you captive, and drawing you to gratify and fulfil its lusts; *who* being thus abandoned to your own ways, without any sign or token of an interest in God, [*were*] *called,* by way of contempt, *the uncircumcision,* uncircumcised abominable sinners, *by that* body of men *which is called the circumcision*[a], on account

[a] *Called the uncircumcision by that which is called the circumcision.*] The terms of *circumcision* and *uncircumcision* in the *abstract* are here plainly put for *circumcised* and

SECT. iv.

Ephes. II. 11.

account of their having received that rite which is *performed with hands*, and imprints a mark *in the flesh*, of which as you were destitute, they who had received and gloried in it avoided you as unclean. But I am sensible your chief misery did not consist in the want of that ceremony, which can by no means avail to the salvation of the soul, or render it, while the heart continues uncircumcised, in any degree accept-

which is called the circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

12 able to God: Your wretchedness was (and see that you remember it with the greatest humility, and with the most affecting sense of the acknowledgments you owe to that free grace which has delivered you from that deplorable condition), *that ye were at that time*, while you were unregenerate Gentiles, *without* any knowledge of *Christ*, or any interest in him, and thus were destitute of all those blessings which he brings to his believing and obedient people: and indeed were without any expectations of the Messiah, and had not those advantages for inquiring after him and embracing him, which the Jews had by virtue of their prophecies, and of the various means ordained to point him out: ye were then *aliens from the commonwealth of Israel*, and had no part in any of the favours granted to them, no claim to their peculiar privileges, nor any right of citizenship with them; not so much as knowing that polity which God had established among his own chosen people, in order to direct their views to the gospel, and to prepare them for the reception of it: and having no communion with the church, ye were then unacquainted with the Divine engagements to it, *and strangers to the covenants of promise* [b], not having any knowledge of the covenant made with Israel by Moses, or of those better promises on which the covenant with Abraham was established

12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise

and *uncircumcised*; as they are likewise Rom. ii. 26; iii. 30; and iv. 9. Thus also to be made *the righteousness of God* is put for being made *righteous by God*, 2 Cor. v. 21.

b *The covenants of promise.*] Though the *covenant* for substance was one and the same, the *apostle* here speaks of it in the *plural* number (as he does also Rom. ix. 4), as it was given out at several times, with various explications and enlargements, not only to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Gen. xii. 2, 3; xvii. 7, 8; xxii. 17, 18; xxvi. 3, 4; xxviii. 13, 14), but afterwards to the whole church of Israel. (Exod. xxiv. 7, 8; Deut. xviii. 15, 18; xxix. 12, 13; and xxx. 5, 6.) And as the *promises* it contained centered in the great *promise* of the Messiah, and of salvation by him, he therefore speaks of them in the *singular* number, but as *one promise*, which is agreeable to the *scripture-style* in other places. Compare Acts ii. 39; xiii. 32; xxvi. 6, 7; Rom. iv. 14, 16; Gal. iii. 17, 22; Eph. iii. 6; and Heb. vi. 17.

c *Having*

promise, having no hope, and without God in the world;

established, and assurance given of the Messiah's coming, and of eternal life through him: so that, in consequence of this, ye were then wholly taken up in the pursuit of earthly things, without any prospect of good things to come, *having no* well-grounded *hope* with regard to a future state [c], no hope of spiritual and eternal blessings, about which, immersed as you were in the cares and pleasures of this lower world, you had indeed but very little thought: *and* though you had such an infamous herd of imaginary deities, and were so eager in the worship of them, and particularly of your great goddess Diana, and of Jupiter, whose daughter she was supposed to be (Acts xix. 35), yet in reality ye were *atheists in the world* [d], for ye lived and conversed in the world, ignorant of the one living and true God, its great Original and Support; and worshipping only such as by nature are no gods (Gal. iv. 8), ye had no conception of any being that was truly worthy to be spoken of by any Divine title.

SECT. iv.

Ephes. II. 12.

13 But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off, are made

But let your hearts reflect with joy and thankfulness on that blessed change which the Divine goodness hath *now* made in your condition, by bringing you to faith *in Christ Jesus;* for having cordially embraced him as exhibited in the gospel, 13

c *Having no hope.*] That the *heathens* had among them the doctrine of a *future state,* and that it was popularly taught and generally believed by the common people, must, I think, appear *incontestible* to any who are at all acquainted with antiquity. But it is as apparent that they reasoned very weakly upon the subject, that they had *no well-grounded hope* of future *happiness,* and that they were but very little impressed with it; so that they had *no deity* to which they *prayed for eternal life,* as the *fathers* often remonstrate. And by far the greater part of their most learned *philosophers* either expressly *denied,* in private lectures to their pupils, the doctrine of *future rewards and punishments,* or taught *principles* quite *inconsistent* with it: as must, I think, plainly appear to any who will impartially peruse what Mr. Warburton has written upon the subject, so judiciously defended in the *Critical Review.*

d *Atheists in the world.*] Both the Christians and heathens, as Dr. Whitby well observes here, called each other atheists, though both worshipped *some deity* real or imaginary; because each supposed the other to reject that which was the *true object* of adoration. But I cannot conceive that the *apostle* would have given to the heathens the character of atheists, if the worship of the *one living and true God* had really prevailed among them to that degree which some *Christian divines* have incautiously maintained that it did. The truth of the matter seems to have been, that though several of them speak of their Jupiter in terms properly applicable to the one *Self-existent* and *Eternal Deity* only, yet they taught and believed other things of him quite inconsistent with such perfections: and those who had some knowledge of *one Supreme Eternal Cause,* yet practically disregarded him; and, however they might reconcile it with the dictates of their consciences worshipped *inferior deities,* and many of them such as were represented under the most scandalous characters, to the neglect of the Supreme Being, and the destruction of all true religion. Compare Rom. i. 20—26; and consult the *notes* on those verses, Vol. VIII. p. 388, 389.

SECT. iv.

gospel, *ye who were formerly afar off* from God, and from all the hopes and privileges of his people, *are* now *brought near* to God and to each other, *by the* atoning *blood of Christ*[e], whereby he hath expiated your guilt, and made a free and honourable way for your approach to God, and partaking in all the benefits of his church. *For he is* the procurer of *our peace*[f], *who* hath reconciled us, whether Jews or Gentiles, to God and to each other, and hath so incorporated us into one church, that it may properly be said, he *hath made both one*, as to an interest in the favour of God and in the privileges of his people; *and* that no difference might remain between us, he *hath thrown down the middle wall of separation*, which divided us from each other, as the wall which runs between the court of the Gentiles and that of Israel in the temple at Jerusalem divided the Gentile worshippers from the Jewish[g]. This happy union between us the Lord Jesus Christ hath accomplished, *having abolished* by those sufferings which he endured *in his flesh*, what was the grand occasion of *the enmity* and mutual alienation which had so long prevailed; [*even*] *the law of* positive *commandments* and ceremonies, [*contained*] *in* the Mosaic *ordinances*, to which the Jews were so much attached, and to the bondage of which the Gentiles were so irreconcileably averse: but this Christ hath now abrogated and taken out of the way, *that* so *he might form the two* opposite parties, by virtue of their union with each other *in himself*, *into one new man*, uniting them together as new creatures in one church, under a dispensation very different from the former, in which they both should equally

Ephes. II. 13. made nigh by the blood Christ.

14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments, *contained* in ordinances, for to make in himself, of twain,

e *Are brought near by the blood of Christ.*] There seems to be an evident *allusion* here to the privileges of those Israelites who were not under any *ceremonial pollution*, or who were cleansed from their guilt by the *blood of atonement*, and so had free liberty of entering the *temple*, and conversing with God; upon which account they are called *a people near unto him.* Psal. cxlviii. 14. Compare Exod. xix. 4, 6; Lev. x. 3; and Psal lxv. 4.

f *He is our Peace.*] This Mr. Locke would have to be the same with *your Peace*, and to be meant of the Gentile converts, of whom the *apostle* had been speaking just before: but it is evident the *reconciliation* as well as the *enmity* was *mutual*, and the Jews were at least as strongly prejudiced against the Gentiles as the Gentiles against the Jews; the *apostle* therefore with consummate propriety goes on to speak in terms which were intended to include *all true believers*, whether originally belonging to the one or the other.

g Divided the Gentile worshippers from the Jewish.] This is that *wall* which was called the *Chel*, which separated the *court of the Gentiles* from that into which *the Jews* only were allowed to enter, of which we have the most authentic account in *Josephus (Bell. Jud.* lib. v. cap. 5 [al. vi. 6], § 2.) Compare note l, on Acts xxi. 28, Vol. VIII. p. 224.

h To

twain, one new man, *so* making peace;

equally partake of the same privileges; [*so*] *making* an entire *peace* between them, and laying a foundation not only for peace, but for mutual love, by removing the ground of those prejudices they had entertained against each other, and joining them in bonds of such tenderness as became the members of one living body: *And* 16 *that he might* complete this blessed work of making peace, and *reconcile* them *both*, as thus united *in one body*, and animated by one spirit, not merely unto one another, but *unto God*, he hath took away the guilt of sin, and made atonement for it *by the* blood of his *cross*, removing by this means what was the cause of enmity between God and them, as they were all transgressors of his holy law; so that he may be properly considered, on account of what he suffered on the cross, as *having slain the enmity by it*, as he hath thus made up the breach which sin had made between God and his offending creatures, by means of the atoning sacrifice of himself. (Compare Col. i. 20.) *And*, having procured 17 this reconciliation by his death, *he came* to both after his resurrection and ascension, in the person of his authorised ambassadors, to whom he hath committed the important trust of speaking in his name and stead (2 Cor. v. 19, 20), *and preached* the glad tidings of *peace* and reconciliation *to you that* [*were*] as Gentiles *afar off* from God, *and to them* also of the Jewish nation *that* [*were*] of old regarded as a people *near* unto him[h]; declaring the foundation he has laid, not only for a sincere reciprocal affection, but for all other most important benefits and blessings. *For*, as the happy fruit and consequence of the peace procured *by him* as well for 18 the believing Gentiles as the Jews, *we both* are introduced into the Divine presence, and *have* an equal title to the liberty of a free *access to* God, as *the* common *Father* of the whole family[i], and may draw near to him with acceptance

SECT. iv.

Ephes. II. 15.

16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby;

17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

18 For through him we both have access by

h *To you that were afar off, and to them that were near.*] It is so natural to refer this to what had been said of the *different states* of Jews and Gentiles, that one would wonder any should have thought of explaining both these characters of the Jews, as signifying those who lived in *distant countries*, as well as those who dwelt in or near Jerusalem where *our Lord* suffered.

i *Access to* God *the Father.*] The word προσαγωγη, which we render *access*, does properly refer to the custom of *introducing persons into the presence of some prince*, or of any other greatly their *superior*; in which case it is necessary they should be ushered in by one appointed for that purpose, to preserve a becoming *decorum*.

k *Strangers*

SECT. iv.

Ephes. II. 18.

ceptance *in* the aids of *one Spirit*, under whose gracious influences we are fitted for the sacred pleasure of conversing with God, and filled with all filial confidence towards him and brotherly affection to each other. (Rom. viii. 15.)

by one Spirit unto the Father.

19 *Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners*[k], like those who came from distant nations to make a short abode among the Jews without a share in any of their privileges, *but fellow-citizens with the saints*, intitled to all their glorious immunities, *and* even the *domestics of God*, admitted to dwell in his house, and to partake of the honours and blessings of his family;

19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

20 *Being built on the foundation*[l] *of the apostles and prophets*[m], who in their respective places, by their miraculous works and predictions, as well as by their several ministrations, have testified the kind regard of God to his people, and made provision for the establishment of the church; *Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-stone*, who holds the several parts together, and sup-

20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-*stone*;

21 ports the whole stress of the edifice: *In whom the whole building, harmoniously cemented*, in such a manner as to add beauty, strength, and unity

21 In whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an

k *Strangers and foreigners.*] I know not how far there is room to *distinguish nicely* between the signification of these two words, ξενοι and παροικοι. If there be, the latter signifies something *more* than the former; and I doubt not but it alludes to the case of *sojourning strangers* among the Jews, who were not incorporated by complete *proselytism* into the body of the Jewish people, and made, as such *proselytes* were, συμπολιται, *fellow-citizens* with equal privileges. And perhaps when οικειοι του Θεου, *domestics of God*, is added, it may have some relation to that peculiar *nearness to God* in which the *Jewish priests* were, and refer to that great intimacy of unrestrained converse with God to which we as Christians are admitted; in which respect our privileges seem to resemble not only those of the *people* praying in the *common court* of Israel, but of the *priests* worshipping in the *house itself*. Nay it is elsewhere added, by a *figure* which seems beautifully to rise even on *this*, that we "have confidence to enter into the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus." Heb. x. 19.

l *Being built on the foundation.*] It is observed by Lord Shaftesbury, that the *apostle* accommodates himself to the taste of the Ephesians, who were extremely fond of *architecture*, by frequent allusions to *building*, and to the majesty, order, and beauty, of which their *temple* consecrated to Diana was so celebrated a masterpiece. (Compare chap. iii. 17, 18; and iv. 16, 29.) But it is certain many allusions of this kind are to be met with in other *epistles*, particularly 1 Cor. iii. 9—17; vi. 19; 2 Cor. v. 1; vi. 16. Compare 1 Pet. ii. 4—8.

m *Of the apostles and prophets.*] I have often wondered that such sensible writers as the late Lord Barrington and Mr. Jeffery should conclude that the *prophets* here spoken of are those of the *New Testament* (Compare Eph. iii. 5; iv. 11; with Mat. xvi. 18). See *Miscell. Sacra*, Essay ii. p. 44; and *Jeffery's Review*, p. 88. Their chief argument is, that the Gentile church here spoken of *was not built upon the foundation* of the *Old Testament prophets*. But not to insist upon it, that when the converted Gentiles came to consult the Jewish writings, they might derive from them great encouragement in their faith, it is to be considered that the *apostle* is now speaking, not of the Ephesian or Gentile church in particular, but of the *whole Christian church* consisting of the aggregate body of converted Gentiles and Jews, as appears farther from what is said in the close of *this verse*, of Christ's being *the chief Corner-stone*.

an holy temple in the Lord:

unity to the whole, *groweth* by the continual accession of new converts, and the advancing graces of those already converted, *into an holy temple in the Lord*, fitly consecrated to him, as being raised and supported by him. *In whom you also*, my dear brethren, believing in him as the great Lord of the church, *are built up together* with all true believers *for an habitation of God*, who *by the Spirit* of his grace takes up his residence among you, and publicly owns his relation to you in consequence of your union with his beloved Son.

SECT. iv.

Ephes. II. 22.

22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET the *apostle's* remonstrance to these *Ephesians* remind us of *our* obligations to the Divine goodness, that *we* are not left in the sad state of our *heathen ancestors;* that we are not *without* the knowledge of *Christ*, in all the darkness of the *Gentile* world; that we are not *aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise;* that we are not *destitute of* any well-grounded foundation of future *hope, and without God in the world.* But how unhappy is the case of many, who, though they are called *Christians*, yet have no saving interest in that *Redeemer* whose name they bear, in consequence of their being strangers to the *obedience of faith*, and a vital subjection of heart to his gospel! Let all that *name the name of Christ*, all that profess to *know him*, acknowledge, with a view to his *atoning sacrifice*, that if they are *brought near to God* it is *by his blood.* To this we owe the external privilege of *a people nigh unto God;* and to the effectual application of it we owe the blessings of that *nearness* which the heart feels as the earnest of its eternal happiness.

Ver. 12

13

If *Christ*, according to the principles of the *apostle's* reasoning, *hath made peace by the blood of his cross* between *Jews* and *Gentiles*, whose manner of living was so widely different from each other; if he *hath broken down the middle wall of partition* between them, and *of two made one new man;* how much more apparently reasonable is it that *smaller differences* should give way to the engagements of so endearing a band! *Have we not all one Father?* And have we not all *access* to him *through one Saviour, by one Spirit?* Let us then consider ourselves as *fellow-citizens with the saints;* and maintain that most cordial affection to all of this *household*, which becomes those that are of *one family*, and are named from *one Lord.*

14, 16

18

19

And, as a great security of this *union*, let us be concerned to maintain

20

SECT. iv.

maintain a due regard to *the apostles and prophets on whom we are built*, whose writings, if perused with diligence and attention, subserve so much to the purposes of *Christian edification*. But, above all, let us fix our regards upon *Christ*, as *the chief Corner-stone*; by a union with whom we are united to each other, and the whole
Ver. 21 stress of our eternal hopes is supported. *In him the whole building* is *fitly framed together*; and it is by his operative influence that it *groweth up to a holy temple in the Lord*. Let us consider ourselves as designed for this use, to be *an habitation of God*
22 *through the Spirit*; and be concerned to cultivate that purity and sanctity which suits so excellent a relation and so high a dignity. Let us *lift up the everlasting gates* of our souls to admit that blessed Inhabitant, that he may come and *dwell in us*, and consecrate us more and more unto himself.

SECT. V.

Farther to recommend the gospel to the regard of these Gentile converts, the apostle strongly expresses the sense he had of the Divine goodness in committing it to his trust, though he was called to sacrifice his liberty in its defence. Eph. III. 1—12.

EPHESIANS III. 1.

SECT. v.

FOR this cause, and for my faithful testimony to this glorious gospel, the plan of which is
Ephes. III. 1. so extensive, so wise, and so benevolent, how little soever it may suit the narrow minds of my bigotted countrymen, *I Paul* [*am*] *the prisoner of Jesus Christ*[a]; being brought under this calamity, the loss of my liberty, *for the sake of you Gentiles*, and in consequence of that firm attachment which I am known to have to your cause
2 and interest. For this I am pursuaded you will consider as the occasion of my bonds, *since* I well

EPHES. III. 1.

FOR this cause, I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles;

2 If ye have heard of

a *I Paul* [*am*] *the prisoner*, &c.] This is often alledged as an instance of an extraordinary *length of sentence* in the *original*, supposing that what begins the first verse of this chapter is resumed again at ver. 14, and not ended till the close of chap. iv. 3. So that the sense runs, "For this cause, I Paul, the prisoner of Christ for you Gentiles,—for this cause [I say], I bow my knees, &c.—[even] I the prisoner of the Lord beseech you therefore that ye walk worthy, &c." Yet as the easy supposition that εἰμι is understood would make the *construction* much more obvious and plain, I have therefore inserted the word [*am*]. But if I were sure the sentence in the *original* was of the *utmost length* that any have maintained, I should think the division of it in any *translation* very pardonable, especially in a *paraphrase*. I have often broke *one period* into *many*, as being much more concerned to give the *true sense* as intelligibly as possible, than to preserve the *grammatical construction* of every word in the *version* where this might occasion obscurity; and it will not be easy for any who have not been exercised in works of this kind, to imagine the difficulty which this precaution has often brought upon me. Compare *note* b on chap. i. 3, sect. i. p. 322.

b *Since*

SECT. V.

Ephes. III. 2.

of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to youward:

well know *you have heard*, and are acquainted with, *the dispensation of the* adorable *grace of God* [b], *which* by his special favour to myself, and those to whom I am the herald of it, *hath been given to me in your behalf*; my zeal for which has been the means of stirring up the malice of the Jews against me:

3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery (as I wrote afore in few words,

And I am confident you cannot forget what you have often heard, *that* to prepare and furnish me for this important work to which the Lord hath called me, *he made known to me by* immediate *revelation*, and not by the instrumentality of any human testimony, *the* great *mystery* which had so long been concealed; *as I have briefly wrote before*, and hinted more than once in this epistle, (chap. i. 9, 10; ii. 11, and seq.) in passages which, though they contain not a full illustration of the matter, yet suggest some material hints with regard to it; *By which when you read* [c], what I have laid before you, and attentively consider and review [*it*,] *you may observe* and form some notion of *my understanding in the mystery of Christ* [d], which so many still remain ignorant of, and so many others are unwilling to acknowledge and admit.

4 Whereby when ye read ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ,)

5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed

This I with great propriety call a mystery, it being a most astonishing and glorious system of Divine truth, *which in other* preceding *generations was not made known to the sons of men* [e]; having

b *Since* I well know *you have heard, &c.*] So I translate the words εἰγε ἠκουσατε, for I think it cannot be imagined that they had *never heard*, during his long abode at Ephesus, from him, and from many others, an account of the *extraordinary revelation* of the *gospel* which he had received. As for the inference that some would draw from hence, that this *epistle* (if it was not written to some *other church* where he had never preached) was written before Paul came to live at Ephesus, I think it absolutely inconclusive; not only considering that the particle εἰγε has often the signification of [*forasmuch as*] or [*since*] or [*seeing that*] but because it is certain he was now a prisoner at Rome, which he never was till long after that abode at Ephesus. (Acts xix. 10, 11.) I may add, that the words ἠκουσατε τὴν οἰκονομιαν are not so properly rendered, *Ye have heard* [*of*] *the dispensation, &c.* which determines the sense to what they might have learned *by report from others*; they may as well express their having heard the dispensation *from his own mouth.*

c *By which when you read.*] Dr. Whitby would render the phrase πρὸς ὁ ἀναγινωσκοντες, *by attending to which*: but as ἀναγινωσκω signifies to *read and review*, or, (as we vulgarly speak) to *con* a thing over in the mind, to root it there, which must suppose *frequent reading*, I choose to retain the common *translation.*

d *You may observe my understanding in the mystery of Christ.*] This Dr. *Goodwin* thinks to be the highest *encomium* made by the *apostle* on any of his own writings; whence he concludes, that this is the *richest* and *noblest* of all the *epistles*, and thinks it was peculiarly intended to be so, to reward the generous zeal of the Ephesians in burning their *curious books*, by a book of *Divine knowledge*, incomparably more valuable than any or all of them. (See Acts xix. 19.) I pretend not absolutely to decide on the comparative excellency of *his epistles* but could not forbear mentioning so remarkable and ingenious a thought. (See *Goodwin's Works*, Vol. I. p. 2.)

e *Which in other generations was not made known,*

SECT V.

having neither been discovered to the Gentiles, who were wholly strangers to it, nor manifested under any former dispensation to those whom God had taken for his people, with any such perspicuity, *as* that with which *it is now revealed by the Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets* of the New Testament dispensation, who have the word of wisdom and of knowledge given to them. (1 Cor. xii. 8.) And what I chiefly have in view, as one very material part of it, is this, *that the Gentiles should be joint-hairs* with the Jews in spiritual privileges, *and* should be members *of the same body* with them, *and partakers together of his promise in Christ*; particularly of the communication of the Holy Spirit in token of their sharing in all the other blessings of the Messiah's kingdom, which the Jews have fondly imagined to be peculiar to themselves, but which are now freely proposed to the Gentile nations *by the gospel* which we are commissioned every where to preach.

Ephes. III. 5.

revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

6 That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ, by the gospel:

7 This is the gospel *of which I was made a minister*, not of my own motion or seeking, nor at all on account of any worthiness in me, but *according to the* free *gift of the grace of God, which* in so extraordinary and remarkable a manner *was given to me*, calling me forth to the apostleship *by the energy of his power*, which wrought so great a change in me as to prepare and qualify me for that high and holy office; to the purposes of which no man living can be more averse than I once was. And when I think of this I am covered with confusion, and know not how to speak of myself in any terms of sufficient abasement; for such was the astonishing condescension of the great God, and such his favour to a worthless creature, that *unto me, who am* so unworthy of the honour of being called an apostle, that I am *less than the least of all saints*,

7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

8 Unto me who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable

known, &c.] The following verse so plainly determines this passage *to the calling of the Gentiles* into the church, that I think there can be no controversy as to the *general sense* of it; though it seemed to me, that the *apostle's* explaining it in the manner he presently does, rendered it improper to anticipate that explication in the *paraphrase*. It was indeed *known long before*, that the Gentiles should be added to the church; but it was not *known* that they should be *heirs of the same inheritance and partakers of the promise of the Spirit* The Jews rather thought of their being *slaves to them*; and least of all did they imagine, that *the middle wall* of their *ceremonies* should be *broken down*, and the Gentiles admitted to the *full privileges* of God's people, without *circumcision* and obedience to the *Mosaic law*; which the *Christian converts* among them heard of at first with great amazement. Acts x. 45; xi. 18

f *Less*

searchable riches of Christ;

SECT. V.

saints [f], and look upon myself, on account of what I formerly was, as below the very meanest among them, *this grace was given*, that I should be employed *to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ*, which while I am endeavouring to trace out in their particular contents, I am quite lost in rapturous amazement, and all my most elevated conceptions are swallowed up in that unfathomable fulness which can never be exhausted. Yet to this honourable and important office am I graciously appointed, to enlighten and instruct as well the Gentiles as the Jews, (Acts xxvi. 18,) *and to make all men see*, in some affecting measure and degree, *what* [*is*] the happiness arising from *the communication of the mystery* of the calling of the Gentiles to be joint-heirs with the Jews, *which from eternal ages was hid*, being concealed *in* the secret counsels of the ever-blessed and incomprehensible *God* [g], *who*, as he at first *created all things by Jesus Christ*, his Divine Son, (John i. 3,) hath new-created also all that are in him by a lively faith, and by him raised them to the prospect of complete holiness and happiness [h]. And this is now revealed and set in a new light, after the more imperfect intimations of it that were given before, *that the manifold wisdom of God*

Ephes. III. 8.

9 And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ;

9

10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly

10

f *Less than the least of all saints.*] It has often been observed here, that the *apostle* makes a *new word* (which, as grammarians would speak, is the *comparative degree of the superlative,*) ελαχιστοτερῳ, which I think *no translation* can fully equal, or very happily express. No doubt, he refers to what he had been formerly, when he *persecuted the church of God:* (compare 1 Cor. xv. 9; and 1 Tim. i. 13.) But whether there be (as Dr. Goodwin thinks, Vol. I. p. 3,) any reference to his name *Paulus*, which in the Roman language signified [*little*], and at the same time to the *lowness of his stature*, which occasioned Chrysostom's calling him τριπηχης, ανθρωπος *a man three cubits high*, I do not pretend to say; and only hint at what Sigonius says; that Æmilius Paulus obtained his additional name from his *low stature*.

g *What is the communication of the mystery*, &c.] Some would translate the following clause τω αποκεκρυμμενω απο των αιωνων, *which has been hid from the ages*, that is, from the former ages of the world: but as in ver. 11. it is called προθεσιν των αιωνων, *an eternal purpose*, and is here said to be *hid in God*, I apprehend no need of varying the *translation*, where the phrase is the same, though to be sure this interpretation includes the sense of the other. It is evident, that here is an allusion to the *burying a treasure* in some secret place (compare Josh. vii. 21: and Matt. xiii. 44; where the same word is used;) as there may also be in the word ανεξιχνιαστος, ver. 8. which properly signifies *what cannot be traced out*, and it is certain, that though something is now *known* concerning *this glorious mystery*, yet there is an incomparably greater part concerning which we only know in the general that it is *a rich treasure*, without particularly knowing either *what*, *how much*, or *where* it is.

h *Created all things by Jesus Christ.*] Mr. Locke pleads, as Diodate had done before, that this refers, not to the creation of the world, but to the renovation of it; and so may be considered as an intimation that God always intended Christ should have the honour of *forming all things anew*, and therefore concealed the mystery in himself till after he was come. But the words, if taken in the most extensive sense contain both a certain and a pertinent truth.

i *Be*

SECT. V.

Ephes. III. 10.

God, discovering itself in such a beautiful and well ordered variety of dispensations, *might now* more fully *be made known*, and be displayed in all its brightness *to the principalities and powers in heavenly* [*places*] even to all the various orders of angelic beings, *by means of* what is done for *the church*[i] which is the happy object of a love that hath produced effects beyond what the spirits of heaven could otherwise have conceived or apprehended; and in the contemplation of it they are furnished with new motives to adore that grace, which by the manifestations of it to the church displays new glories unparalleled in all the history of heaven, in the surprising methods taken to complete the

11 number of its blessed inhabitants: All which gracious operations proceed in perfect harmony with the original plan adjusted in the Divine Mind; *according to the eternal purpose which he formed* before all ages *in Christ Jesus our Lord*[k], both to be executed by him, and to terminate in him; which as his well-beloved Son he was appointed to effect, and all the benefits of which he has secured to be communicated to the

12 church: Even that blessed Mediator, *through whom we have freedom of speech* in our approaches to the throne of grace, *and* have *access with confidence* of being heard, as being assured of audience and acceptance *by the faith of him*; in a reliance upon whom we may address ourselves to God with the humble cheerful liberty of children whom he hath adopted into his family, and united to himself in the dearest and most indissoluble bonds.

heavenly *places*, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.

11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

12 In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

IMPROVE-

i *Be made known to the principalities and powers in heavenly* [*places*], &c.] The *prophecies of the Old Testament* gave strong *intimations*, at least, of the intended *calling of the Gentiles* into the church; and the *angels* seem expressly to refer to it in what they said to the *shepherds*, and in their *anthem* at the nativity of Christ, (Luke ii. 10, 14.) I apprehend therefore, that the *apostle* here would lead the thoughts of his readers to the *series* of Divine dispensations as *gradually* opening this great discovery, and not merely to what *he preached* concerning it; though to be sure that greatly illustrated the scheme.——It is strangely unnatural to explain this clause as Mr. Locke would do, of *the Jewish principalities and powers*; by which he is driven to the hard shift of connecting εν της πολυποικιλου *with the wisdom of God*, which the first reading of the word in the *original* will shew how little they will bear.

k *According to the eternal purpose*, &c.] Mr. Locke would render κατα προθεσιν των αιωνων, *&c. according to that predisposition of the ages*, or several dispensations, *which he made in Christ Jesus*, which by the pre-ordination of God's purpose were all regulated and constituted in him; and Dr. Whitby taking it in the same sense: explains it of his being promised in the first age to Adam, typified in the second to the Jews, and in the last age preached to *all the world*. But perhaps this interpretation may coincide more with a sense they are so solicitous to avoid, than either of these learned authors were aware.

IMPROVEMENT.

ST. Paul's *understanding in the mystery of Christ is* just matter of perpetual joy to the *whole Christian* world, and especially to the *Gentile* churches, which have derived from thence so much of their knowledge and of their hope. Let us congratulate ourselves and each other on the propagation of so glorious a *system* of Divine truth, which had so long been *concealed from ages and generations.* The *apostles* and *prophets* were raised up by God to receive and reveal it: and *we are entered on* the blessed fruit of *their labours;* (John iv. 38.) Let us learn from *them* to set a due value on our *participation* in that *inheritance,* on our *union* to that *body* to which by the gospel we are called. SECT. V. Ver. 4 5 6

May it particularly teach us that *humility* which was so conspicuous, so amiable, so admirable in *St. Paul.* This excellent man, this distinguished favourite of heaven, who stood in the foremost rank of *Christians,* of *ministers,* of *apostles.* yet labours for words to express the sense he had of *his own meanness* and unworthiness, and commits a kind of *solecism* in language, that he might lay himself as *low* as possible; using the most *diminutive* term that could be, to describe himself as one who in his own esteem was *less than the least of all saints!* And shall *we* then exalt ourselves, and be proud of the *trifling distinctions* that raise our obscure heads a little above some of our brethren? 8

Let those in particular, who have the honour of being called to the sacred office of the *ministry,* consider how reasonable it is, that instead of being *puffed up* with it they should rather be *humbled,* when they reflect how *unworthy* the best of men are of it, and in how *defective* a manner the most faithful discharge it; while yet *the grace is given* them *to preach the riches of Christ,* his *unsearcheable riches.* Let these be made the frequent subject of their preaching; and let all the course of it be directed, in a proper manner, to the illustration of *that* subject. Let the *well-chosen phrase* which the *apostle* uses here, teach *them* and all *Christians* to *search* more and more into this unfathomable abyss; as still sure to discover *new wonders* in the variety and fulness of its inexhaustible contents beyond what they have known before, and to find *new pleasures* in tracing again those already known. 8

This glorious theme is worthy of the contemplation of *angels;* and we are elsewhere told, that these celestial spirits *desire to look into it* (1 Pet. i. 12.), and to learn new displays of the Divine attributes *from the church.* Let us then hear and worship, as under *their inspection;* and let not our hearts be cold to these sacred truths 10

SECT. V.

truths which are *our own salvation*, while they *rejoice* in them only on the *general* principles of piety and benevolence.

Ver. 11 All that is done in the prosecution of the glorious design of our *redemption* now, is the result of those *counsels of peace* which God *from eternal ages* formed in his own compassionate mind. To that source, after the example of the *apostle*, let us frequently trace all with the most exalted gratitude; recollecting that we *receive this adoption in Christ*, who is the great *Mediator* of our *access unto God*. Let us therefore, on the one hand, take all our encouragements in *prayer* from views to him; and on the other, having such a foundation for it, *let us come with* an holy *boldness* to the Divine *throne*, that so we may *obtain the mercy and grace* which we daily and hourly *need*.

SECT. VI.

The Apostle represents the earnestness with which he prayed for their establishment in Christianity, as the best wish the most fervent affection could dictate for them. Eph. III. 13, *to the end.*

EPHESIANS III. 13.

SECT. VI.

Ephes. III. 13.

SUCH and so great are the privileges to which the gospel raises us; *wherefore*, as I have been the happy instrument of bringing it among you, though (as I said before, ver. 1,) I am now a prisoner for you Gentiles, yet *I desire*, my dear brethren, *that ye faint not*, or be in any degree discouraged *at my affliction for you which* when it is thoroughly considered upon what account I endure these sufferings, must be acknowledged to be so far from any reason to dishearten you, that it may rather serve for the encouragement and confirmation of your faith, and *is* indeed *your glory:* for it is really an honour that God does you, in employing his faithful servant to lay out his time and strength, and even to sacrifice his liberty, in your cause; and that courage and chearfulness in which God is pleased to support me in the midst of all these hardships, shews his farther regard for you, and may justly be esteemed as intended by him, not for my comfort only, but for an additional honour to you.

EPHES. III. 13.

WHEREFORE I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

14 *For this cause*, that the great work in which I am engaged may more successfully be carried on, and that the purposes of these my sufferings may be answered in your consolation and the Divine glory,

14. For this cause I bow my knees unto the

the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

glory, while I am here in the retirements of my prison, I am daily pouring out my soul to God on your account, and with the most affectionate concern for your establishment, *I bend my knees* *to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ;* even of that great and glorious Redeemer, *of whom the whole family* both *in heaven and on earth is named*[a], by whom angels and men are incorporated into one society, and as well those who are gone before to the possession of the heavenly inheritance, as those who are here on earth, receive a more excellent name than that of children of Abraham, and are united in one happy family, of which he is the Head. And the great petition I am addressing to his Father and ours, is this; *that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory*, out of those redundant stores of goodness in his gracious heart which can never be exhausted, *to be mightily strengthened by* the effectual operation of *his Spirit*, invigorating and increasing every grace, and carrying on his work with abundant success, *in the inner man*, that is, in all the various powers of your souls; so as thereby to fortify you under every trial, and animate you more and more to every good work: And as it is from Christ as our common Head, that all these blessings of the Holy Spirit are imparted, I am daily importunate with God, *that Christ may dwell in your hearts*, that he may take up his stated residence in your souls, *by* the continual exercise of a lively *faith*, by means of which a constant intercourse with him will be maintained, and an assurance given you of your interest in him: *being* also *rooted and grounded in love*, stedfastly fixed

SECT. vi.

Ephes. III. 14.

15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.

16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in love,

a *Of whom the whole family in heaven and on earth is named.*] As Christ is the person last mentioned, immediately before the words εξ ᾧ [*of whom,*] it seems most reasonable to interpret this clause as referring to *him;* though others rather choose to understand it *of the Father*, who is indeed the principal subject of the foregoing sentence, nor would I insist upon the sense here given. Both Mr. Locke and Diodate explain it *of God the Father*, the Lord of the whole family, including all believers, who are jointly with Christ, who is already in heaven, *the sons of God*; in confirmation of which sense Mr. L'Enfant observes, that we are said to be εκ τυ Θευ, and δια τυ Χριςυ; and it is certain Christians are said to belong to *the family of God* (chap. ii. 19.)—— Mr. *Boyse*, also goes into the same interpretations (in his *Four last Things*, p. 588,) and argues from hence, that *departed saints* are *in heaven* before the resurrection, or otherwise according to this distribution, as they are not *on earth*, they would not belong to *God's family*. But *heaven* may here be taken in a great *latitude* for *all* the regions of happiness in the *invisible world*, though the place in which *separate spirits* dwell should be *different from that* which they are to inhabit with Christ after the resurrection.—The Jewish writers call *heaven* the upper, and *earth* the lower family of God.

b *The*

SECT. VI.

fixed and settled, not only in the knowledge of his love to you, but in the exercise of a fervent love to him and to each other, which will so greatly tend both to nourish and establish the

Ephes. III. 17.

18 soul. *That,* under the influence of these united principles of faith and love, *ye may be enabled with all saints* in every place, to whom whether known or unknown, I wish this as the most invaluable blessing, *to apprehend* with greater clearness *what* [*is*] *the breadth, and length, and depth, and height* [b] of the great mystery of redeeming love, and to survey with a becoming astonishment, and with some suitable conceptions, the vast dimensions of that glorious plan; that in some measure you may see how wide it extends, even to all nations and ages; how far it reaches, even from everlasting to everlasting; from what an abyss of misery it delivers us, and to what a summit of felicity and glory it exalts us.

18 May be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

19 This is my earnest and importunate prayer for you, and for all the rest of my Christian brethren; that ye may thus be enabled with greater admiration to contemplate, *and* more abundantly *to know the love of Christ, which,* after all we can say or think of it, *surpasses* by infinite degrees the most advanced *knowledge* [c], even of the angels themselves, and how much more of mortal men in this imperfect state: but I wish you more enlarged apprehensions of it *that* so *ye may be filled with all the fulness of God* [d], that

19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

b *The breadth, and length, and depth, and height.*] It has often and very justly been observed, that this *text* is *wonderfully emphatical.* Bodies are well known to have only *three* dimensions, *length,* and *breadth,* and *thickness;* but the apostle Paul divides this last into its *depth* downwards, and its *height* upwards, measuring from the middle point; and so makes use of it to express the *depth of misery* from which the love of Christ delivers us, as well as the *height of glory* to which it exalts us, See *Blackwall's Sacr. Class,* Vol. I. p. 350.

c *To know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge.*] I can conceive no imaginable reason, with Mr. Locke, to confine the interpretation of this *text* merely to *the love of Christ* in *calling the Gentiles.* Well may we recollect on this occasion *all that love* which Christ has displayed in *redeeming his church* out of every nation and kingdom under heaven, Gentiles as well as Jews, from final misery, and exalting it to eternal glory. And *this* is so remarkable and admirable, that *the most extensive* explication of this *text* must certainly be the most proper.—Nor can the phrase of *its surpassing knowledge* merely signify its exceeding the *Jewish dispensation* (which is seldom, if ever, called *knowledge,*) but its exceeding *our most elevated conceptions.* The *catachresis* here used greatly enhances the beauty of the expression on this explication, whereas otherwise it must appear very dry and jejune.

d *That ye may be filled with all the fulness of God.*] It is rightly observed by the learned and pious Professor, *Franckius (Manud, ad Sac. Script. legend,* p. 191,) that there is in these *two verses* an *allusion* to the *temple*; expressing his wish that the *foundation* might be so extensively and *deeply* laid, that a *superstructure* may be raised extending itself to such a magnificent

SECT. VI.

that your expanded hearts, being dilated more and more, may be rendered capable of admiting larger degrees than ever of Divine love, and more ample in-dwellings of Divine consolation; till at length ye arrive at that happy state in which ye shall attain to a full perfection in the knowledge and enjoyment of God, where that which is perfect shall come, and ye shall know even as also ye are known.

Ephes. III. 19.

20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.

With these prayers am I softening the sorrows of my own imprisonment, and endeavouring to do what I can towards supplying to you and other Christians the deficiency of those public services which my present confinement forbids: and I doubt not but these humble petitions will come up in remembrance before God. Methinks I see them even *now* descending in blessings on my head and on yours, from the adorable Source of all good; and therefore I cannot forbear adding, *To him that is able to do* all things for us, not only to the utmost extent of our petitions, but *abundantly exceeding all that we [can] ask or conceive, according to the power which* is already so illustriously displayed, and *worketh* so efficaciously *in us; To him* [*be*] *glory in the* whole *church* both of Jews and Gentiles, the happy society which he hath so wonderfully redeemed, and so bountifully enriched *by Christ Jesus* its glorious Head, through whom all his blessings descend to us, and our praises ascend to him: and may they ascend *throughout all* the most distant ages and periods, while earth with its successive *generations* continues; and may they resound from all his redeemed in the mansions of glory, far beyond the limits of time, even *for ever and ever*[e], *Amen.* Let your hearts with mine consent to it; and in that consent anticipate something of that pleasure, with which we hope for ever to render these praises.

20

21 Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

21

IMPROVE-

cent *length*, and *breadth*, and *height*, as to be fitted to receive and lodge the *sacred Guest*, that he might *dwell* as it were *uncrowded* in their hearts. And in this view it will indeed appear a noble train of thought.

e *Throughout all generations for ever and ever.*] This is one of St. Paul's self-invented and most expressive phrases, εις πασας τας γενεας του αιωνος των αιωνων, which a learned *critic* justly defies any *version* whatsoever fully to express. (See *Blackwall's Sacr. Class.* Vol. I. p. 83.)—*Through all the successions of an endless eternity* may come something near it; but even this, *emphatical* as it may seem, falls vastly short of the sublimity and spirit of the *original*.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. VI.

LET our eyes be frequently directed to *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, and our *knees* be frequently *bowed before* Ver. *him*, invoking him under this amiable and delightful character as 14 the great *Father* of that one *family* which he hath been pleased 15 in infinite mercy to form to himself; *a family* consisting not only of those who were originally the inhabitants of *heaven*, who were born in his house, and have never offended him, but of many who have been, and many who are the inhabitants of *earth*, once the children of the curse, and the heirs of death and destruction.

15 Let us all remember it is now *the family of Christ*, our great elder Brother, who, though *the Lord of heaven*, disdains not to own that humble relation while the *angels* are adoring him as standing at the head of the society, and esteem it their honour to be related to him. Let us be more affected with the *grace* extended to us, and consider our relation to him as *a bond of union* among ourselves. While we are of *this family*, let not the *different garbs* we wear, or the *different apartments* in which we are lodged, alienate our affections from each other; but let us often be thinking of that blessed day when *the whole family* shall meet above, and let us in the mean time endeavour to behave as worthy *members* of it, and have its *common interests* at heart.

And from that eminently faithful and honourable branch of the family, the blessed *apostle*, whose words we have been reading, let us learn *what to wish* for ourselves and our brethren: 16 even that God, *according to the riches of his grace*, would *strengthen us with might by his Spirit in the inner man*; that we may attain great degrees of vigour and confirmation in *religion*, by the vital and powerful *operations* of the *Holy Spirit* of God upon our hearts; that we may be *strong* to discharge every duty, to resist temptations, to conquer our enemies, to assist our brethren, and 17 to glorify our Father and our Saviour. Let us earnestly desire, that *Christ* may not only now and then *visit* our hearts, but by the habitual and lively exercises of *faith* may *even dwell* in them; that we may thus be continually conversant with him as our most honoured and beloved *Guest*; and that *love* may take *deep root* in our hearts, and be solidly *grounded* there. Let us earnestly pray that, under Divine *illuminations*, we may be enabled to *form* more 18 exalted and suitable *conceptions* than we have ever yet attained of the *breadth, and length, and depth, and height*, of this *unfathomable*, this inconceivable *love of Christ, which surpasses* the

perfect

perfect *knowledge* even of saints in glory. And O that by these contemplations we may find ourselves daily *filled with all the fulness of God*, so that our hearts may even overflow with the abundant communication of his gifts and graces! SECT. VII. 19

What shall we say *in return* for *the knowledge* he hath already given us, for *the love* which he hath already wrought in our hearts, if we are so happy as to *know the grace of God in truth?* What! but that believing *his power* to *out-do* all it hath already wrought for us, yea to *do for us exceeding abundantly above all* 20 *we can ask or think*, we will still confide in him and call upon him; and will humbly endeavour to bear our part *with the whole church*, in ascribing to our *Redeemer*, our *Sanctifier*, and 21 our *Father*, *glory throughout all ages*, and even *world without end. Amen.*

SECT. VII.

From the consideration of his own sufferings, as well as for the many important respects in which all true Christians are united, the Apostle pathetically exhorts them to mutual love, and to steadiness in religion, by representing to them the glorious foundation which Christ as the great Head of the church hath laid for it. Eph. IV. 1—16.

EPHES. IV. 1.
I THEREFORE the prisoner of the Lord, beseech

EPHESIANS IV. 1. SECT. VII.

I HAVE mentioned my bonds but a little while ago, and I shall mention them now again; for nothing can tend so much to soften them as to find them the occasion of honour to Christ, and good to his church; and nothing surely can more powerfully move you to regard the exhortations I would offer to you: *I therefore* call upon you to consider me while you read this, as in confinement, not for any crime that hath deserved such treatment, but as *the prisoner of the Lord* Jesus Christ[a], in bonds of my fidelity to Ephes. IV. 1

a *The prisoner of the Lord.*] Some have observed of *this epistle*, and of the others which were written by the apostle Paul in his *imprisonment* (namely, those to the Colossians and Philippians, as well as that to Philemon, and the *second* to Timothy), that they are more especially remarkable for their excellence, and discover a peculiar *savour* of the *things of God:* by which it may be seen, that while *his sufferings* did abound, *his consolations* also did abound much more. It is however manifest that *this epistle*, as it sets forth, in the *preceding part of it*, the gracious design of God in the gospel dispensation, and represents the benefits and privileges that belong to *all the faithful in Christ Jesus*, as well to Gentiles as to Jews, is cast into a strain of *thanksgivings* and *prayers*, and written (as it were) all in a rapture, in a sublime and elevated style, as flowing from a mind transported with the consideration of the unsearchable wisdom and goodness of God in the work of redemption, and of the amazing

SECT. vii.

to that gospel he hath committed to my charge. And I *beseech you* by the memory of my chains, *that ye* make it your great care and daily labour, to *walk worthy of the* high and holy *calling wherewith ye are called:* let there be nothing in your temper and conduct beneath the dignity to which you are raised, and the illustrious hopes which are set before you; but shew that the crown of glory is ever in your eye, and that your hearts are duly impressed with it: And particularly as you have received the pardon of your sins, and are adopted into the family of God, let the remembrance of it engage you to behave *with all humility* and lowliness of heart, under a sense of your former guilt and misery, and your unworthiness of that mercy which God hath magnified towards you; *and* thus to carry it with *meekness* towards those who may have troubled you by their frowardness, tenderly passing over their infirmities and indiscretions, as sensible what great offences have been forgiven to yourselves. And should you meet with injuries from any of your brethren, as it is to be feared that even among professing Christians this will sometimes happen, do not think much to bear with them; but let me entreat you, that ye endure them *with long suffering* and patience without seeking revenge, and *forbear one another* in such circumstances, *in* the unfeigned exercise of mutual *love*[b]: And not on this occasion only, but with respect to your whole carriage to each other, how different soever your sentiments and practices may be in matters of an indifferent nature, be still *endeavouring*, so far as in you lies, *to keep the unity of the Spirit*, that unity of heart and affection which becomes those who are regenerated by one Spirit acting on them all, and forming them into one body; joining them thus together *in the bond of peace*[c], and

Ephes. IV. 1. beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

2 With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love;

3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

amazing love displayed in Christ towards the Gentile world. And the *remaining part of it* is no less admirable for the engaging manner in which he improves what he had before delivered, urging the *duties* which became their character, with the greatest tenderness, in expressions full of love and endearment, adding the strongest arguments to enforce them, and making mention of *his bonds* to recommend the exhortations that he offered to them.

b *With long suffering, forbear one another in love.*] As there is no *copulative* between *meekness* and *long-suffering*, it seems most natural to connect the latter with the following clause: and if the exhortation be thus rendered, it will prevent the *solecism* which would arise from connecting ανεχομενοι with υμας in the verse before, to which we should be led by our *translation*. See *Blackwall's Sacr. Class.* Vol. I. p. 98.

c *To keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*] See an excellent discourse on these words, in Mr. *Baxter's Practical Works*, Vol. IV. p. 628, *& seq.*

d *One*

and sweetly engaging them, not only to the most pacific, but to the most affectionate conduct to each other.

Ephes. IV. 4.

4 *There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

For this is indeed the case with regard to all that have truly and cordially embraced the gospel, and nothing can be stronger than the motives to this union, when it is considered, that with respect to the whole church [*there is*] only *one body*, of which ye all are members, and should as such have the same care for one another (1 Cor. xii. 25); *and* in this body there is *one Spirit* that enlivens, actuates, and fills it, under whose influence it should be your concern to act in such a way as to resemble him who is the Spirit of love and peace; and there is one inheritance that ye are waiting for, *as ye are also called in one* blessed *hope of your calling*, and should live therefore as inspired with the same joyful expectation of being all brought to the same blessed end, to one glorious abode in the heavenly world: There is also *one Lord* and Head of all, even Jesus Christ, who hath come down from heaven and died for our salvation; that he might incorporate us all into one society, that he might instruct us all in *one faith*, and might unite us all in *one baptism*[d], in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: And thus he introduces us all into the knowledge and favour of the *one God and Father of all* true believers, *who* in the infinite perfections of his essence [*is*] *above all*, governing all without exception as the supreme Ruler of universal nature; who animates *and* operates *through all*, by the diffusive influence of his vital presence; *and* who is particularly *in you all*, by that special residence which he holds in those that are the temples of his grace.

5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

6 One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.

Such are the great engagements we are under to the strictest and most affectionate union; and howsoever we may be distinguished from each other, by the variety of our gifts, or by the difference of our stations, these several distinctions ought to be regarded by us, not as matter of emulation and contention, *but* rather as an additional obligation to love, when we consider the

7 But unto every one of us is given grace according

d *One baptism.*] It is mere *trifling* to object from hence against *water baptism*, since there can be no room to oppose that to the *baptism of the Spirit*; and it is very plain that the *apostle*, while he declared that there was but *one baptism*, practised that of *water*.

e *Grace.*

SECT. VII.

the great source and design of all; for *grace is given* and dispensed in different degrees *to every one of us* in particular, not for the merit of one above another, but *according to the measure of the* free *gift of Christ*[e], in such a measure as seems best to him, the great Sovereign of the church, to bestow it; whose distributions we always know to be guided by consummate wisdom and goodness, so that we all have the highest reason entirely to acquiesce in them. For we receive whatever gifts we have from Christ, and they are all bestowed by him; *wherefore* the words of David may be considered as applicable to this[f], where *he says* (Psal. lxviii. 18). "*When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive*[g], *and gave gifts unto men:*" for naturally may our devout meditations rise from that glorious pomp with which God went up from mount Sinai, when he had triumphed over the Egyptians, and poured down blessings on his people, to that illustrious ascension of our blessed Redeemer,

Ephes. IV. 7.

cording to the measure of the gift of Christ.

8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

e *Grace is given to every one of us*, &c.] That their *differing* in some respects, though united in so many, might not be urged as any plea for *self-esteem*, or *neglect of others*, who wanted such distinguishing advantages, the *apostle* properly insists upon it, that *all* is communicated to us by way of *free gift* and sovereign liberality.

f The words of David may be considered as applicable to this.] I cannot undertake to prove, that the *passage* here referred to is, strictly speaking, a *prediction* of *Christ's ascension*, and of his *shedding down* the gifts and graces of the *Spirit*. The Psalmist celebrating *a late victory*, goes back in rapturous meditation to *God's victory* over the Egyptians, and the spoils with which he enriched the Israelites, ungrateful and *rebellious* as they had been, and by which he prepared for himself in the course of his providence *a dwelling among them;* for the *tabernacle* was built principally with *those spoils*. And the *apostle* beautifully *accommodates* the words to the *triumph* of an *ascending Saviour*, and to the royal *donative* of the *Spirit;* which he shed down on *his church*, into which many who had been once most *rebellious* were admitted, and whereby it was fitted to be *his habitation*. We render the clause quoted, *Thou hast received gifts for men;* but the Hebrew word signifies, *Thou hast taken*, and may either express taking from the enemy, or taking out of his own royal treasures.

g *He led captivity captive.*] This is a phrase that signifies the leading on *a train of captives*, but may with greater *emphasis* be applied to those who of *conquerors* and *oppressors* are made *captives;* (compare Judg. v. 12.) And thus it may be properly understood of the *triumph of Christ* over *sin*, *Satan*, the *world*, and *death*, by whom such multitudes were conquered and enslaved.—Mr. Pierce indeed has taken great pains to prove that these words are to be interpreted of the *good angels*, as if the meaning were, "that Christ led in triumph the *angels* who voluntarily subjected themselves to him, after having been before his *fellow-guardians* in presiding over other countries, as he was God's *Vicegerent* in Israel." And to establish this, *he largely pleads*, that neither the *devils*, nor the souls of *departed saints*, ascended with Christ into heaven, and consequently that these words must refer to the train of *attendant angels*. But Christ might *poetically* be said *to lead captivity captive*, when he triumphed over those that had subdued his people, and acquired such a power over *the infernal spirits*, as a conqueror has over *a captive* that he drags at his chariot-wheels. In this view it may also be observed, that the Egyptians, over whom God is represented as *triumphing* in the *passage* quoted from the lxviiith Psalm, though they might seem to be taken *prisoners* in the Red sea (Exod. xiv. 23—28), were not, in strictness of speech, *led in triumphant procession*, but *immediately destroyed* by the Divine vengeance.

h His

Redeemer, when he had vanquished our enemies on the cross, and returning to his Father, poured down his royal donatives like a triumphant conqueror[h] upon his faithful subjects, yea gifts, in which those who had long been rebellious, and had but lately laid down their weapons, were to share. *Now this* [*expression*] that *he ascended, what is it*, or what does it imply, *but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth*[i]; having come down from heaven and dwelt in this earth of ours, yea and submitted even to lie in the caverns of it for a while under the power of death? For to this low humiliation our thoughts may naturally be conducted, the subject being so familiar to our mind, and the phrase so capable of suggesting these ideas to us. And on the other hand it leads us to reflect, that *he who descended* to such forms of humble abasement *is also the* very *same* glorious and triumphant Person *who ascended far above all heavens*, beyond the regions of the air, into the heaven of heavens; going up, as the Psalmist elsewhere speaks, with a shout and with the sound of a trumpet (Psal. xlvii. 5), received with the acclamations of all the hierarchy of heaven, and seated on a throne of glory, *that he might fill all things* with his influence, and direct and over-rule all by his wisdom and power.

SECT. vii.

Ephes. IV. 8.

9 (Now that he ascended, what is it, but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?

9

10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

10

Accordingly he hath shed down a rich variety of gifts and graces from his triumphal seat at the right-hand of the Father, to qualify and endow his servants for those various offices in the church which he hath wisely and graciously instituted for the advancement of his interest and kingdom: *and* thus, among the gifts which he bestowed to be employed for the advantage of his people in their respective situations, *he gave some* to be *apostles*, whose office should be personal, but should extend in its effects to the remotest generations,

11 And he gave some, apostles; and some,

11

h His royal donatives like a triumphant conqueror.] Many have observed that here is an *allusion* to the custom of *conquerors*, who used to give *largesses* to their soldiers after a triumph; (see *Limborch. Theolog.* lib. iii. cap. 25, sect. ii.) And though the Roman instances of this custom are perhaps the most familiar to our minds, yet all who are acquainted with *antiquity*, know that it was not peculiar to them. Compare Judg. v. 28—30.

i *Into the lower parts of the earth.*] Bishop *Pearson (on the Creed*, p. 229) has shewn how very precariously this is urged as a proof of *Christ's descent into hell;* the phrase being such as other *scriptures* plainly lead us to refer, either to his *incarnation* (Psal. cxxxix. 15), or his descent into the *grave*. Compare Psal. lxiii. 9, and Matt. xii. 40.

k *And*

SECT. vii.

Ephes. IV. 11.

nerations, sending them forth to preach the gospel unto every creature as his special witnesses, and forming them, under the plenary and most abundant influences of his Spirit, to the fullest knowledge of that scheme they were to publish to the world (compare Mark xvi. 15, and 1 Cor. xii. 28); *and some* he gave to be *prophets*, who were to explain the mysteries of faith, and to foretell future events, by virtue of the extraordinary revelations made to them; *and some* to be *evangelists*, who were to travel from place to place, and to fulfil such particular commissions as the apostles should give, in settling and establishing the churches they had planted (Acts xix. 22), being furnished with such miraculous powers as were necessary for that purpose: *and*, besides these extraordinary officers, he also gave *some* to be settled *pastors and teachers*[k], who were to be of standing use, to preside in the several congregations of the saints, taking the stated oversight of them in the Lord, and to instruct them both in public and private, as their respective circumstances should require; nor were these left destitute of proper assistances, though not distinguished by such eminent endowments as the former.

some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12 Now the intent of all these institutions, offices, and gifts, was *for the perfecting of the saints*, or finishing the character of holy men who should be destined *to the work of the ministry*[l], in subordination *to the* great view that is still to be maintained

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry,

k *And some pastors and teachers.*] I shall not take upon me to determine whether *two different offices* are intended here, of which *the former* were intrusted with the care and oversight of particular churches, whereas *the latter* only were employed in instructing the people by way of exhortation, without being called to the *pastoral office*, though, if this were the case, it seems most probable they would have been expressed *distinctly* as the others are; *and some pastors, and some teachers.*—But I cannot forbear saying, it has been justly observed, that if Diocesan bishops were the very remedy by which the Holy Ghost designed to prevent, or to heal those *schisms* of which the *Ephesian church* was in such apparent danger (Acts xx. 29, 30), it is very strange there should be no mention of *them* amidst all these *ecclesiastics* which are here enumerated, though some of them inferior to the supposed bishop in dignity.

l *For the perfecting of saints to the work of the ministry.*] Bishop Burnet understands the former clause, of their being *initiated into the church* by the holy ordinance of *baptism*. (See *Burnet on the Articles*, p. 282.) Others would render προς τον καταρτισμον, *for the compacting*, &c. as if it signified their being *brought together* and united into one society, whether they had been formerly Jews or Gentiles. But I rather think, with Dr. Marshal, the clauses are to be connected, and may more properly be rendered (as in *Blackwall's Sacred Classics*, Vol. II. p. 174), *For the fitting of holy men to the work of the ministry*; which strongly implies by the way, that *no unholy man* should be employed in it. And thus there can be no necessity to suppose a *transposition* of the words with Grotius, as if the meaning were, *For the work of the ministry*, which is *to perfect the saints, and to edify the body of Christ*,

nistry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

maintained, of building up and *edifying of* the church, which is *the body of Christ*, that its numbers may be increased, and each member advanced in knowledge and in grace: *Till we all arrive at the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge* or acknowledgment *of the Son of God*, in such entire harmony and agreement as will cement us together in still dearer bonds; and getting above that infant-state in which so many of us now are, we shall grow up *to* the maturity of *a perfect man*, even *to the* full *measure of the* spiritual *stature*, so as to reach what may be called the standard *of the fulness of Christ* [m], attaining to those eminent degrees of grace and goodness which will fit us to become his stated everlasting residence, and to be filled with the most glorious tokens of his presence and favour.

SECT. vii.

Ephes. IV. 13.

13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ;

14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

In the mean time, it is the design of God by these means to give us greater firmness and establishment in religion, *that we may be no longer* like little *children, tossed to and fro* as waves of the sea, *and borne about* as a vapour in the air, *with every wind of doctrine*, and every vain puff of breath, uttered with violence and eagerness, and as it were mechanically managed *by the cheating sleight of* designing and interested *men*, [*and*] *by* their various *subtilty in every method of deceit* [n], which some insinuating teachers will not fail to exercise upon you, though I hope you will be able to discern and defeat it: *But maintaining the truth in love* [o], or stedfastly adhering to the doctrines of the gospel with that candid and charitable temper which it inculcates, and without which our clearest and most extensive

14

15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the Head, *even* Christ:

15

m *To the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*] The sense given in the *paraphrase* is so obvious, and suits and illustrates the peculiarity of the phrase so well, that I cannot but wonder at the impertinence of those who (as Dr. *Lightfoot* tells us in his *Remains*, p. 289,) have inferred from *this text* that the *saints* should be *raised* at the last day exactly of the *age of Christ* when he died, and that their *stature* should be just the *same* with his; referring to the ambiguity of the word ηλικια, as signifying both *stature* and *age*.

n *By the cheating sleight of men, [and] by their subtilty in every method of deceit.*] The word κυβεια, as many *critics* have observed properly signifies the *artifice* of those infamous *gamesters* who know how to *cog the dice*. Some would render the last words, εν πανουργια προς την μεθοδειαν της πλανης, *by craft and doubling according to the subtil method of imposture:* but I think the rendering above is more literal, and am in part obliged to Mr. Blackwall for the *version and paraphrase* here. See his *Sacred Classics*, Vol. I. p. 305.

o *Maintaining the truth in love.*] It is to be hoped that no reader, and especially none of the *sacred order*, will fail to observe what the *apostle* here so plainly asserts, namely, that it was the design of the ministry to preserve *peace* and *charity*, as well as *orthodoxy*, *regularity*, and *discipline*, in the church.

SECT. VII.

extensive knowledge will do us but little good, *may* we *grow up in all things*, from an infant to an adult state, *into him who is the Head* [*even*] the Lord Jesus *Christ*, the great Centre of union, as well as the original Source of life and motion:

Ephes. IV. 15.

16 And by the constant exercise of mutual affection may we be more and more united to him, *from whom*, as from the head, conveying influence and nourishment to every member, *the whole body* of Christians, *being harmoniously joined, and* strongly *cemented together* in the closet union, *by the supply of every joint* through proper channels of communication (as by the veins and arteries, the nerves and sinews, in the natural body,) *according to the energy* which is *proportionable to* the necessity of *every part*, and properly adapted to its respective place and function, *makes an* uniform and happy *increase of the* whole *body*, by the regular growth and nourishment of each member, *to the edifying of itself in love*; or, in plainer terms, the whole church, by the exercise of faith in Christ as its glorious Head, is edified and supported, and each part of it grows in mutual love, in proportion to the degree of its regard to him.

16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 If Divine grace have taught us to know *the hope of our calling* it will surely add great weight to these pathetic *exhortations* of this faithful servant *and prisoner of Jesus Christ, to walk worthy of it*; to *walk* as it becomes those to do do who have been favoured with *a call from God*, who have received the honour of *a call* to the blessings of his gospel, to the privileges and hopes of his children. It will teach us that *humility, meekness, and long-suffering*, of which our Divine *Saviour* was so glorious an example, which 2 will engage us to the exercise of *mutual forbearance*, and which so well suits those whom he hath brought into so happy a state.

3 May we all experimentally know the sweetness which attends a constant care to *keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace*; that we may labour earnestly to maintain it, and with the utmost diligence may guard against those things which might lead us in any degree to violate it!

4 To engage us to this, let those arguments which the *apostle* suggests be familiar to our mind. Do we not all indeed belong to *one body*, however called by different denominations? Have we not all, so far as we are truly *Christians*, received *one spirit?* Is there

there *not one hope of our common calling*, even that of dwelling together in one and the same blissful world, with God, and with each other? Have we *not one Lord, even Jesus Christ*, to whom we all equally profess subjection? who hath taught us *one faith*, who hath instituted *one baptism*, and who hath introduced and consecrated us to *one God and Father of all?* And what are the considerations which should prevail so far as to *divide us*, when compared with such bonds of *union* as these? SECT. vii. Ver. 5 6

Let us all therefore, in the name of this God, *who is over all*, who operates *through all*, and *in us all*, in the name of this *one Saviour, and one Spirit*, (awful and endearing names, into which we were *all baptized,)* charge it upon our own souls, that we not only do nothing by a factious and uncharitable temper *to divide his church*, but that we study what we can do to *heal its breaches*, and to promote *its growth and edification.* And let us pray, that God would *guide and succeed* our endeavours for that purpose, and preserve our hearts in such a situation and temper, that we may stand continually willing *to give up every temporal interest* that may interfere with such a design; yea, and even to make *our own blood*, if such were the will of God, the cement of *those wounds*, at which *a body* so intimately *united to Christ* has so long been *bleeding* almost to death. 16

Were we actually to give *such a proof* of our regard to it, we could but very imperfectly *repay* the condescension and love of that *Saviour*, who for us *descended to these low regions of the earth*, and dwelt for a while among the dead; and then triumphantly rising, *and ascending on high*, led those *enemies* that had before held us in *captivity* themselves *captive*, as at his chariot-wheels; and having *received gifts for men*, scattered them down with such royal munificence, *that he might fill all things*, and fit *his ministers* for the *offices* to which he had destined them. 9 8 10

These *his ministers* we are taught by *this passage* to regard as the *special gift of his love* to the church, and as such let us adore him for them; not only for *apostles, prophets, and evangelists*, but also for *pastors and teachers.* And let us earnestly pray, that through the continued influences of *that Spirit* which he hath *sent down* from on high, *holy men*, may in every succeeding age be so perfectly and completely *fitted for the work of the ministry, that the body of Christ may be edified;* that by this means *we may all come to that union*, to that strength, to that *full maturity*, to which by calling us into the fellowship of the gospel he intended to raise us. 11 12 13

In the mean time, while we are advancing towards it, may we rise above that *childish weakness*, which would make us the 14

SECT. VII. sport of *every wind of doctrine*, and a prey to every *artifice of designing men*. Let us ever *maintain* a due regard to the united interests of *truth and love*, that our *union with Christ*, may be secured, and our *growth in him* more happily and abundantly advanced.

Ver. 15

SECT. VIII.

The Apostle urges the converted Ephesians to distinguish themselves from the Gentiles, by the holiness of their behaviour, as they were so much distinguished from them by knowledge and grace; and particularly presses upon them the duties of veracity, meekness, and purity. Eph. IV. 17—30.

EPHESIANS IV. 17.

SECT. VIII. *THIS I say therefore*, for your further instruction how to walk worthy of your calling, *and* most earnestly and affectionately *testify* it to you *in the* name of the *Lord*, *that* now ye are so happily brought into the Christian church, and made partakers of such privileges and advantages *ye no longer walk*, as, alas, ye have so long done, and *as the rest of the Gentiles*, who remain unconverted still continue to *walk*, *in* such a course as plainly shews *the vanity of their mind*, amused with the poor empty trifles of this world, and inslaved to low and mean pursuits, utterly unworthy of their rational nature: *Having the understanding darkened* with respect to spiritual things, by the influence of the prince of darkness upon them, and *being alienated* in affection as well as in their practice *from the life of God* [a], from that noble principle of true religion which is indeed the Divine life in the soul, forming it to the service and imitation of him by whom it is implanted; to which they are wholly strangers, and have indeed an utter aversion to it, *by reason of the ignorance* of truth and goodness *that is in them*; yea, *because of the* absolute *blindness* and obstinacy *of their heart* [b], the evil passions of

Ephes. IV. 17.

Ephes. IV. 17. THIS I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart;

a *The life of God.*] I apprehend this does not merely signify a life prescribed by God to his people, as Mr. Locke understands it, but that it intimates a life consisting in a righteous and holy *imitation* of his perfections, and a constant *devotedness* to his service; and perhaps it may also intimate its being originally derived from him. Compare ver. 24.

b *Because of the blindness of their heart.*] This is explained by Chrysostom, Dr. Whitby, and other *commentators* of note, both

Ephes. IV. 18.

of which turn it into a kind of chaos, which will not admit the rays of Divine truth shining around them in the works of creation and providence, by the observation of which they would be formed to much better notions, even on natural principles, if they would but do justice to themselves. But alas, what can be expected from wretches who have debauched their consciences with such a course of profligate immoralities, as to have lost all sense of shame? *who being grown* quite callous (as it were) and *insensible* to all goodness, *have abandoned themselves* to every kind of enormity, and especially *to* the grossest *lewdness*, so as *to work all uncleanness with* insatiable *greediness*; transgressing the bounds, not only of virtue and decency, but even of natural appetite, and shamefully soliciting their own lusts, under a sad incapacity of nobler and more rational enjoyments.

19 Who being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness;

19

Into such profligate and brutal sensualities as these, the heathen world are sunk; *but ye have not so learned Christ* [c], as if his religion were a mere system of speculation, that might leave you practically attached to such abominable vices. Its precepts inculcate upon you lessons of the strictest purity, and I am persuaded that you feel the genuine tendency and design of it in your hearts, powerfully inclining you to act upon them; *seeing ye have* in effect *heard him* [d], even the Lord Jesus Christ himself, speaking to you in his word by us his authorised ambassadors,

20 But ye have not so learned Christ;

20

21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him

21

both ancient and modern, as referring to their Gentile state: but though there is no doubt but it refers to that, yet I see no reason to limit such a description only to the dark and ignorant heathens: it is, as Dr. Owen observes, too just a representation of the *natural blindness* of men in their unregenerate state.—How the words νους, διανοια, and καρδια, which all come into this description, are to be *distinguished*, is matter of much debate. It is certain they are used in *different senses*, not only by *different writers*, but by the *same* writers in different places: but, on the whole, it seems most probable to me, that νους here signifies *the mind* in general, comprehending διανοια, *the intellectual faculties*, and καρδια, the *affections* and *passions*; by the irregularity and obstinacy of which *the understanding* is often obscured, and led into the falsest and most irrational judgments. See below, *note* h on ver. 23.

c *Ye have not so learned Christ.*] This may perhaps intimate that there was *a manner* of *learning Christ* which might seem more consistent with such irregularities, and may glance on *some teachers* who called themselves Christians, and yet took very little care to inculcate *practical religion*. Many passages in the *apostle's* writings shew this to have been actually the case, though it seems *these teachers* had not much footing at Ephesus. Compare 2 Tim. iv. 3.

d *Seeing ye have heard him.*] That the particle ειγε may be thus rendered, has been observed before in *note* b on Eph. iii. 2, p. 347. So that no conclusion can be drawn from hence that *this epistle* was not written to the Ephesians, with whom he had long been conversant, but to some *other church* that he had never seen, and with whose circumstances he was not so well acquainted.

SECT. viii.

dors, *and have been instructed in him* and his religion *as the* uncorrupted *truth is in Jesus*, and not in that imperfect and adulterated form in which some presume to deliver what they call his gospel.

him, as the truth is in Jesus:

Ephes. IV. 21.

22 Give me leave therefore to urge and entreat you, according to the many good instructions you have already received, *to put off*, and entirely to lay aside, *with respect to the former conversation* [e], or to those sinful habits and practices which were the scandal and dishonour of your Gentile days, *the old man* [f], *which is* depraved and *corrupt* in every part of it, and whose actions are directed, not by the rules of reason, and a regard to the will of God, but *according to* those *deceitful lusts* [g] which generally prevail in the world, and once prevailed in you likewise, and sunk you into so degenerate a state; lusts, which could lead you to no rational and solid happiness, but deluded you by vain appearances and fallacious hopes, which always ended in

22 That ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

23 your disappointment and shame: *And* labour more and more, by cultivating every motion of the good Spirit of God upon your hearts, *to be renewed in the Spirit of your mind* [h], that your rational powers, being duly directed by his illumination, may maintain a proper command over all the inferior faculties of your nature, and unite them in the prosecution of that great end which you ought continually to be proposing to

23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

24 yourselves. *And* thus, let it be your care *to put*

24 And that ye put on

e *To put off*, &c.] As the verbs αποθεσθαι, ανανεωσθαι, and ενδυσασθαι, are all in the *infinitive mood*, it shews how they are connected with the preceding words, and that the sense of them is, "*Ye have been instructed—to put off the old man, and to be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and to put on the new man*:" accordingly I have preserved this connection in the *version*, but, to avoid such an excessive length in the *paraphrase* as would have made it both disagreeable and obscure, I have here, as in many other places, broken one sentence into several.

f *The old man.*] As particular *dispositions of mind* are sometimes expressed by particular *garments* when a man appears in them, so the whole of a good or bad character may be represented by *a complete dress*, yea by *the body* in which he appears; and *vice*, alas, being too *natural*, and getting the first possession, whereas *goodness*, if it ever succeeds at all, is adventitious, the former may well be called *the old*, and the latter *the new man*.

g *According to the deceitful lusts.*] Some have explained this of the lusts into which they were led by the artifices of the *heathen priests*, who represented them as not disagreeable to their established *deities*; or by the sophistry of their *philosophers*, who found out so many *fallacious* excuses for the grossest vices. But the sense given in the *paraphrase* seems most certain, and of the most general importance; *considerations* which I have always endeavoured to keep in view in the whole of this work.

h *In the spirit of your mind.*] The word νους seems here to be put for *the whole soul*, and πνευμα, *the spirit*, for its *intellectual* and leading *faculty*, on which the *Spirit of* God might chiefly operate, yet not exclusive of some influence on the *inferior* powers. See 1 Thess. v. 23, and compare *note* d above on ver. 18.

i *True*

on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

put on the new man, to clothe yourselves with every habit of virtue and goodness, with every pious principle and disposition, belonging to the character of such as are renewed; even that new man, *which is created* by Divine grace, *according [to the image of] God*, the great Standard of perfection, and is so formed as to resemble him *in* universal *righteousness and true* evangelical *holiness*[i], which, so far as it prevails in the human soul, is indeed the likeness of God, drawn upon it in the most amiable lineaments. (Compare Col. iii. 10.)

SECT. viii.

Ephes. IV. 24.

25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour; for we are members one of another.

Wherefore, on these great principles, beware of every vice to which you have been formerly addicted; and, in particular, *putting away every lie*[k], whatever any of the heathens may have taught or practised, *speak every one* of you with the greatest simplicity and strictness, the exact *truth to his neighbour; for we are* all (as I observed above), by virtue of our union to Christ our common Head, *members one of another*, and therefore it would be very indecent and improper, for the sake of any little separate advantage of our own, to injure or deceive a fellow-member, which indeed the common bond of humanity might lead us to detest, if the peculiar engagements of our holy profession were not considered. 25

26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

If any occasion arises which obliges you to *be angry*, which indeed may, and often will be the case, let not your anger discompose your spirits, *and sin not* in the excessive indulgence of that turbulent and dangerous passion[l]; but see that there be a justifiable cause for the resentment 26

i *True holiness.*] As οσιοτης της αληθειας stands in a beautiful opposition to επιθυμιαι της απαλης, *deceitful lusts*, I have chosen therefore, with *our translation*, to render it in a similar manner. But Archbishop *Tillotson* would translate this clause, *the holiness of truth* (Vol. II. p. 349), and Dr. *Owen* also prefers this rendering, by *truth* understanding *the gospel*, and so explaining it of *evangelical holiness* in opposition to such *mere moral virtues* as might be found in an *heathen*. See Dr. *Owen on the Spirit*, p. 325.

k *Every lie.*] This το ψευδος seems to express, and *lying* is so opposite to that *sincerity* which becomes a Christian, that what is said against it may be best taken in the most extensive sense.—Dr. Whitby has well shewn, in his *note* on this passage, that several of the best of the *heathen moralists* thought *lying* might in many cases be *justified*; and I wish that none but heathens had ever taught so loose and dangerous a doctrine.

l *Be ye angry, and sin not.*] It is evident that this is not *a command to be angry*, but a *concession* only, with a *caution* to beware of *sinning* in it. (Compare Isa. viii. 9, 10; and Nah. iii. 14, 15.) It must however imply the thing to be *possible*; for to imagine, as a celebrated *divine* does, that it is as if it were said, *Do if you can be angry without sin*, seems beneath the dignity which the *apostle* always preserves in his writings.

m *Let*

SECT. VIII.

ment you express, and that your anger do not then rise beyond its proper degree, nor err in its continuance: and in this view, *let not the sun,* however, *go down upon your wrath*[m], lest it grow into inveterate malice and habitual spleen:

Ephes. IV. 26.

27 *Neither* in this respect *give place to the devil,* who labours as much as possible to possess and inflame the spirits of men with mutual enmity, and to induce them to give ear to slanderous reports and accusations, that he may make their characters deformed, and their state miserable like his own.

27 Neither give place to the devil.

28 *Let him that,* while he was in his heathen condition of ignorance and vice, *stole* from others what was their just property, or in any other method defrauded his neighbour, *steal* and defraud *no more*[n], knowing that God is the avenger of all such injuries: (compare 1 Thess. iv. 6.) *But rather let him labour* diligently, *working with* [*his*] *hands* in some honest employment *that which is good* and creditable; that he may not only support himself, without trespassing upon society, or being in any respect a burden to it, but *that he may have* [*something*] *to impart to the necessitous,* and may be capable of sparing somewhat out of what he gains by industry in his calling, for the relief of such as stand in need of it.

28 Let him that stole, steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with *his* hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

29 *Let* me exhort you also to take heed that *no corrupt discourse,* no putrid, filthy, and offensive speech, *proceed out of your mouth*[o], to debauch the

29 Let no corrupt communication proceed

m *Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.*] Many have observed that this was agreeable to the Pythagorean practice, who used always, if the members of their particular society had any difference with each other, to give *tokens of reconciliation* before *the sun went down.* (See Dr. *Scott's Christian Life,* Vol. I. p. 326; and Dr. *Whitby's note,* on this place. Were *family prayer* always practised in the *evening,* it might have an happy tendency to promote the observation of this *excellent precept,* intended (no doubt) to prevent persons *going to sleep in anger,* or being *kept wakeful* by such thoughts as continued quarrels, especially between near relations and friends, will be apt to occasion. Gloomy meditations in the silence of the night, inflame the sense of the supposed injury, and cherish fiercer resentments, till perhaps at length purposes and counsels of revenge succeed. See *Limborch Theolog.* lib. v. cap. 45. sect. vi.

n *Let him that stole steal no more.*] *Stealing* as Dr. Whitby has well shewn here, was a very common vice among the heathens; but, how justifiable so ever the *Lacedæmonian law* relating to it might be in a *political* view of which see *Rollin, Man. de Etudier,* Vol. III. p. 341, *& seq.* I fear it tended to *abate the horror* persons should have of invading, in any respect, the property of each other, and to *corrupt* the minds of *young people,* by forming them to a *subtile and knavish turn,* which, however it might fit them for plundering their enemies in war to which the genius of that *commonwealth* was too much directed, would certainly tend to make them *bad* children, servants, and citizens.

o *Let no corrupt discourse,* &c.] This undoubtedly refers to *obscene talk,* which is with great propriety called *corrupt* or *putrid*

ceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

the minds of those that are about you, and to irritate those irregular dispositions of the heart, which it may, in many instances, even without such incentives, be so difficult to restrain: *but* embrace every opportunity that may conveniently be taken of introducing *any thing that is good*[p], and which may tend *to useful edification, that* you may thus by your discourse promote the spiritual benefit of those that you converse with, and *it may* rather serve to *minister grace to the hearers*, than to check any good, or encourage any evil and irregular thoughts.

SECT. viii.

Ephes. IV. 29.

30 And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

And on the whole, be very careful that you *do not*, by any such immoralities as I have cautioned you against, *grieve that Holy Spirit of God*, and provoke him to withdraw his gracious and comfortable influences from your minds; seeing it is this Spirit *by whom ye are sealed unto the day of redemption*[q]. His operations are the mark of God set upon you, by which you may be known to be his property, and may be assured that he will remember you as such, in that great day when he makes up his jewels; even then, when he completely redeems and delivers all his people: till which blessed time you are preserved in your adherence to religion by this Spirit, in the midst of all the dangers and difficulties which surround you; and consequently are obliged always to conduct yourselves towards him with the greatest respect and veneration.

30

IMPROVE-

putrid, as the word σαπρος signifies, in direct opposition to that which is *seasoned with salt*, and is recommended (Col. iv. 6), as tending to preserve from such *putrefaction* and rottenness. It is strange that such *indecencies* as are here censured should ever prevail, especially among persons whose *rank in life* requires a *politeness* of behaviour which would engage them to guard against *this*, much more than against any thing offensive in their *person* or *dress*.

p *Any thing that is good.*] This seems the proper import of τι τις αγαθος, which is literally, *if any thing be good;* intimating that if any *useful thought* arise, or an occasion may be fitly taken to graft an *edifying remark* on any thing that passes in conversation, there should be a readiness to improve it; that so every one may furnish out his *quota*, without unprofitable and disagreeable *chasms of silence*, or the necessity of having recourse to *any thing that is ill* to prevent them; which, alas, is too often the case.

q *By whom ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*] This term of *sealing* seems to be *a metaphor* taken from *merchants* putting some *seal* or *mark* upon their commodities, by which they may be known to be *theirs*. One of the *ancients* somewhere says, "*Delicata res est Spiritus Dei:*" *There is*, if we may so express it, *a certain delicacy in the Spirit of God*, which should engage those who desire his influence, solicitously to guard against every approach to what might be grossly *offensive* to him.—*The day of redemption* in this connection must signify *the resurrection* (compare Rom. viii. 23); which is here mentioned with the greatest propriety as the time when they, who in consequence of this *sealing* shall be finally owned as *the property of God*, shall be gathered *into his treasury*.——Το πνευμα το αγιον του Θεου, is so emphatical, that it seemed best to render it, *that Holy Spirit of God*.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. viii.

THAT we are all naturally so much *alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in us*, that *our minds* are naturally so *dark*, and our *hearts* so *hard*, is indeed matter of the justest lamentation. But since *we have learned Christ*, since the light of his blessed *gospel* hath been imparted to us, and we are no longer numbered among the *heathen nations*, let us not abandon ourselves to those *irregularities* of temper and life, for which even *their ignorance* will not be a sufficient excuse; since even *natural light* might teach them to condemn and to abhor such courses.

Ver. 14, 18, 20

There are *deceitful lusts*, according to which *the old man is corrupt:* let us be always on our guard against them, and labour after such a *renovation* as becomes our profession; and, in order to its being effectual, let us be earnestly solicitous to obtain it *in the spirit of our mind;* that we may shew its influence upon us, not merely by *ceasing to do evil*, but by *learning* to the utmost of our power *to do good.* Thus let it be our care to *put on the new man*, to be partakers of a new and holy nature, and to be brought to the whole of that temper in all its branches, by which we shall *resemble* the blessed God, the bright *Original* of universal *righteousness and holiness*, and the great *Model* of *perfection.*

22, 23, 24

In consequence of this, remembering *our relation* to each other, let us *speak the truth from our hearts;* and upon all occasions let us *treat others* with the same candor and integrity with which we would *ourselves* desire to be treated.—If *anger* rise, let it be on *just* occasions, and in *due* proportion; and let us take care that it *rest not in our bosoms*, lest by indulging it *we give place to the devil*, and become like that malignant spirit.—Let us be *upright in our dealings*, and conscientiously avoiding the iniquitous practice of *defrauding others*, let *generous* and *charitable* sentiments always possess us; nor let those whose circumstances in life may constrain them to maintain themselves by *their own labour*, think they may violate the strictest rules of *honesty*, or are dispensed with from all obligations to *relieve others*, more necessitous than themselves.—In short, whenever we engage in *conversation*, let us avoid every thing that may have the remotest tendency to *corrupt discourse;* and let us study what may *improve* and *edify* the minds of our *hearers;* embracing every opportunity of suggesting *any thing that is good*, and that may tend to *minister grace*, or to promote the more abundant exercise of it in the minds of those in whom it is already implanted.

25, 26, 27, 28, 29

Thus

Thus will *the Spirit of God*, that sacred Agent by whom we are *sealed to the day of redemption*, be *delighted*, instead of being *grieved*, as he so frequently is by the vain and foolish discourses of those who would *be thought* his temples, of those who indeed *are so*. For his influences let us look, to dispose us to *every good word and work*, and seasonably to remind us of these *plain* but *weighty* admonitions, which, alas, are *so little* remembered by the *generality* of *Christians*, that one would imagine they had scarce ever *read them*. SECT. VIII. Ver. 30

SECT. IX.

The Apostle pursues the practical exhortations given in the two former sections, and especially insists on those to mutual love, which he enforces by the consideration of the Divine compassions as displayed in the gospel, and strongly cautions them against the gross impurities of the heathen. Eph. IV. 31, *to the end.* V. 1—14.

EPHES. IV. 31.
LET all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

EPHESIANS IV. 31.

AS I have been exhorting you to take heed that you do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, I cannot but particularly caution you against those malignant passions which do most directly oppose his benign influences. And therefore *let all bitterness, and indignation, and wrath, and clamour, and evil speaking*, and all contentious and ungovernable passions, *be put away from you*, and removed to the greatest distance, together *with all malice*[a]: do not passionately resent every trifle, nor bitterly inveigh with all the licentiousness and keenness of satire against those who have greatly injured you; nor let your anger be noisy in its language, venting itself in clamorous reproaches and abusive railings, or be deeply treasured up in the mind to wait for opportunities of revenge; for all these things are most contrary to the nature of God, the genius of Christianity, and the character of its SECT. IX. Ephes. IV. 31.

a *Let all bitterness, and indignation, and wrath*, &c.] If each *different word* that is here made use of is to have a *different idea* annexed to it, I suppose the *explication* given in the *paraphrase* may illustrate its signification. But perhaps, after all, it might only be the *apostle's* design, in amassing so many almost *synonymous* expressions together, to shew that he would have them be upon their guard against *all the malevolent passions*, and those outrages of speech and expression which they tend to produce.—The like *remark* may be applied to many other passages of *scripture*, and particularly to those where *all kinds of lewdness* are forbidden in such a *variety* of phrase and language.

b *Even*

SECT. ix.

its great Founder. *But*, on the contrary, *be* courteous and *obliging to each other* in your daily deportment, and *tenderly compassionate* towards those that are in any affliction and distress; *freely forgiving one another* whatever imagined or real injury may be in question, *even as God in Christ*, and for his sake, *hath freely forgiven you*[b] such inexcusable and heinous injuries and affronts, as are infinitely greater than any which it is possible for you to receive from your fellow-creatures.

Ephes. IV. 32.

32 And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Chap. V. 1.

Be ye therefore, in the exercise of kindness and forgiveness towards one another, *imitators of* that *God*[c] to whom ye are under such unspeakable obligations, *as* his *beloved children*, whom he hath not only forgiven after so many and great offences, but adopted into his family, and raised to such glorious privileges: *And*, as a demonstration of your readiness to please and honour so gracious a Father, see that ye *walk in love*, and steadily pursue the paths of benevolence and goodness; which ye are under additional engagements to do, *as Christ also hath loved us* in so wonderful a degree, *and* hath manifested his love to us at so expensive a rate, that he *hath* even *given himself up for us*, voluntarily surrendering himself to those cruel enemies whom he could with infinite ease have destroyed (compare John xviii. 6); and having submitted to become their captive, he yielded up his life upon the cross, and was there made *an offering and sacrifice to God*[d]; for it is evident, that in this

CHAP. V. 1. Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;

2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God

b *Even as God in Christ hath freely forgiven you.*] This plainly teaches us that the great doctrine of the *atonement* or *satisfaction* of our blessed Redeemer is always to be explained *in such a manner* as may leave room for the honour of *God's free grace and mercy*, in the pardon of our offences consequent upon it.

c *Be ye therefore imitators of God.*] This, as it is an inference from the *last verse* of the *preceding chapter*, ought by no means to have been separated from it; and, as the *apostle* is pursuing here the exhortation which he there began to *mutual love and forgiveness*, and does not finish it, till the end of the *next verse*, it had been much more proper that the *two first verses* of this chapter should have been connected with what goes before, and that *this chapter* should have begun with ver. 31 of the former.

d *An offering and sacrifice to God.*] Dr. Bates (in his Harmony of the Divine Attributes, p. 254) thinks that the different words, προσφορα and θυσια, are used in reference to *the peace-offering* and *the sin-offering*, as the truth of both is in the *sacrifice of Christ*, which appeased God, and obtains the blessings consequent upon his favour. But I cannot lay much stress on *this distinction*, as προσφερω is used in a multitude of places in the *Septuagint* for presenting *any victim* before God, as it is likewise in the *New Testament* (Matt. v. 23, 24), for *bringing a gift*, and *offering it* on the altar; and when distinguished from θυσια (Psal. xl. 6, *Septuag.*) it answers to מנחה, the *mincha*, or offering of *fine flour*, with a proper quantity of *wine*, *oil*, and *frankincense*, with which the sacrifices of animals were to be attended, and thus to be presented as *an offering made by fire* of

God for a sweet, smelling savour.

this view his death was intended by himself, and was regarded also by the Father, who was well pleased, not only with the variety of virtues and graces which he exercised in it, but with the atonement that was made by it, and gratefully accepted it *for a sweet smelling savour*, or as a fragrant odour that was far more delightful than any of the victims, or any of the perfumes, which had been offered of old, whether on the brazen or the golden altar: and through him also will your acts of liberality, beneficence, and goodness, come up before God as a grateful memorial, and draw down upon you the most valuable blessings.

SECT. ix.

Ephes. V. 2.

3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named amongst you, as becometh saints:

But, as you expect this, you must make it your care to maintain a due consistency of character, avoiding not only all malignant passions but every kind and degree of impurity and licentiousness: and therefore, *let not fornication, nor any kind of uncleanness* [e] *or insatiable desire* of sensual gratifications or of the means of procuring them [f], *be so much as named*, or heard of, *among you*; but abstain from these evils, and whatever might lead to them, *as it becometh saints*, who are conscious of the sanctity of their name and profession, and dread the thoughts of debasing it. 3

4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient:

And in this view let there be *neither filthiness*, or any shameful indecency in conversation, found among you, *nor foolishness of speech, nor*, those *lewd turns* and ambiguities of expression [g], *which* though they are practised by the heathens, and may not seem so evidently criminal 4

of a sweet savour unto the Lord. (See Lev. ii. 1—9; and Numb. xv. 3—14.)——It may here be used in conjunction with the former, to signify the *completeness* of the sacrifice.

e *Nor any kind of uncleanness.*] This is beyond all controversy the meaning of και πασα ακαθαρσια; and had I been more literal, and rendered it, *let not all sort of uncleanness be mentioned*, the sense had not been given so exactly, and occasion might be taken for grounding an *evasion* on it, for which the different genius of the Greek language lays no just foundation. See the *original* of Acts xx. 25, and *note* f on that text, Vol. VIII. 209.

f *Or insatiable desire*, &c.] This is certainly a very literal rendering of the Greek word πλεονεξια, which plainly signifies *the desire of having more* of any thing whatsoever it be. And as there was nothing indecent in the mention of *covetousness*, in the usual sense of it, as expressing a greedy desire of riches and *gain*, many good *commentators* suppose it refers to that inordinate desire of unnatural lust for which the Gentiles were so infamous, and to which the Ephesians were so much addicted, as being in consequence of their riches a very *luxurious* and debauched people. Compare Ezek. xvi. 28, 29.

g *Nor* those *lewd turns*, &c. This seems the natural import of the word ευτραπελια, on which many might value themselves as what they apprehended a *delicate turn* given to some ambiguous expression: and *Aristotle* in his *Ethicks*, using this very word, recommends it as what renders conversation agreeable.—Dr. *Lucas* thinks it included wantonness, profaneness, and keenness of *satire*. See his *Inquiry after Happiness*, Vol. III. p. 207.

h *Nor*

SECT. IX.

criminal, yet *are by no means convenient* for Christian converts; *but rather* abound in the language of *thanksgiving* and devotion, to which we have so many obligations in every circumstance, and which would give a pleasure so much more sublime than any animal indulgencies and delights.

Ephes. V. 4.

convenient: but rather giving of thanks.

5 See then that you be cautiously and resolutely on your guard against all such enormities; *for ye* well *know*, and have been taught *this*, as ye have learned Christ, *that no fornicator, nor unclean person*, who habitually gives himself up to any kind of pollution, *nor* any *covetous man*, who is greedy of those things which minister to his sensual appetite, and *who is* therefore *an idolater* [h] of the worst kind, deifying as it were the vilest idols, *hath* or can have *any inheritance in the* holy and happy *kingdom of Christ and of* 6 *God*. *Let no one* then, in this respect, amuse and *deceive you with vain words* and sophistical arguments, by which it is well known that many, and especially some that call themselves philosophers, attempt to vindicate some of these things, or at least to extenuate the evil of them; *for* I am divinely commissioned to assure you, that *on account of these things*, and such as these, *the wrath of God cometh* even *on* the Gentiles, *the children of disobedience* and infidelity: now if heathens are punished for them, much less can we suppose that professing Christians, who have so much greater advantages for purity and virtue in all its branches, and are under such peculiar engagements to cultivate it, shall escape 7 with impunity in these shameful practices. *Be ye not therefore partakers with them* in these abominations now, if ye would not finally partake in that dreadful condemnation and misery which they are bringing on themselves by them.

5 For this ye know, That no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them.

8 *For ye were once* indeed in a state of gross and heathenish *darkness*, in which it is no wonder you were abandoned to such practices, as you had no just discernment of the sinfulness and danger of them; *but now* [*ye are*] *light in the Lord*,

8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now *are ye* light in the Lord;

h *Nor covetous man, who is an idolater.*] In whatever sense *covetousness* is used (see *note* f above,) it may be called *idolatry*, as it is setting up *something else*, and (be it what it will) something comparatively *very base* and *contemptible*, and pursuing it, as if it were something that could be to us, as in the place of *God*, *a supreme* happiness.

i *The*

Lord; walk as the children of light.

Lord, and are brought into a clear evangelical day, as being instructed by the word of God, and savingly illuminated by his Spirit; see therefore that you *walk* in such a manner *as* becomes those who are *children of light*, and desire to do an honour to that light of which they are born, and to that celestial family to which they now belong. *For* ye cannot pretend to be ignorant of the duties becoming such a birth and relation, as *the fruit of the* Holy *Spirit*[i], by which you are regenerated [*is*] most evidently manifested *in* the practice of *all goodness, and righteousness, and truth*: the operations of it on the soul being attended with such light and influence, as to teach men of all ranks, orders, and conditions in life, invariably to observe the strictest rules of benevolence in their tempers, integrity in their dealings, and sincerity and veracity in their words. Be careful therefore to cultivate these dispositions, *proving* thereby *what is well-pleasing to the Lord*, and making the experiment how happy they are who in all things govern themselves according to his injunctions.

SECT. ix.

Ephes. V. 8.

9 (For the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth;)

9

10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

10

11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

Walk then, as I have said, in such a manner as becomes children of light, *and be not joint partakers* with any about you *in the unfruitful works of darkness*[k]; works which, far from being in any respect profitable or advantageous, are in their consequences most pernicious, tending to involve the soul in the gloom of guilt, and to lead it down to everlasting darkness; and therefore how excusable soever these things might be accounted in your heathen state, they are apparently most unbecoming in the midst of Christian knowledge and privileges; and as you would not practise them yourselves, see to it that you do not countenance or encourage others in them, or by any means make yourselves accessary to the evil they occasion, *but rather reprove them* with plainness, though at the same time with all meekness and humility, and more especially express your detestation of them by your

11

i *The fruit of the Spirit.*] It may be sufficient briefly to observe, that for πνευματος some *copies* read φωτος, *the fruit of the light.* The sense is the same, but the number of varying *manuscripts* seems not sufficient to confirm that *reading.* Yet I have had some regard to it in the paraphrase, as in some other instances of a like nature.

k *The unfruitful works of darkness.*] It is well known that ακαρπος in Greek, and *inutilis* in Latin, are sometimes used to express not only *unprofitable* but *mischievous* things: and this is undoubtedly the meaning of the original word here. Compare Rom. i. 28, and vi. 21.

SECT. IX.

Ephes. V. 12.

your good conversation in Christ. There is indeed a great deal you will meet with to reprove, and in some instances the reproof is better given by actions than by words: *for it is* really *a shame even to speak* particularly *of those things which are done by them in secret*, and sometimes in what they call their religious mysteries too[l], many of them being of such a nature, that the very mention of them has a tendency to taint the mind, as well as to shock all chaste and modest ears.

12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

13 *But* to you that are light in the Lord, the vileness of these works of darkness is abundantly discovered, as *all things which are* such as ought to be *reproved* have their iniquity laid open, and *are made manifest by the light*; since where the light of the gospel comes, even though they are not particularly mentioned and described, yet they are exposed and condemned, and the soul which receives it is inspired with an abhorrence for what might any way lead to them; *for whatsoever doth make* objects *manifest* in their proper forms and colours, *is light*; and therefore the gospel well deserves that name, as teaching those who are instructed in it to judge rightly concerning the moral nature of actions, and inculcating such general principles as will be of use to them in every particular case that can possibly arise.

13 But all things that are reproved, are made manifest by the light; for whatsoever doth make manifest, is light.

14 *Wherefore* when God is speaking in the prophecies of the Old Testament of the calling of the Gentiles, and of the light which they should have by Christ, *he says* in effect to those who are yet in darkness, though not exactly in these words, *Awake, thou, that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light*[m]; and this particularly is the most

14 Wherefore he saith, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

l *A shame to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.*] See Dr. Whitby's note on this text, concerning the impure and abominable nature of some religious nocturnal *mysteries* of the heathen. The *quotations* there brought, with many others which might be added to them, plainly prove, that if as the learned Mr. Warburton supposes, the lower sort of *mysteries* among them were first intended by the *magistrates* to impress the minds of the people with the belief and sense of *future* rewards and punishments, and the higher sort of them to instruct persons of more reflection and penetration than the rest in the knowledge of the true God, and the other great principles of natural religion, they were long before the *apostle's* time greatly corrupted and degraded to the most detestable purposes; so that some persons in public characters, by no means remarkable for the purity of their own morals, thought it absolutely necessary, in order to prevent the most scandalous and profligate disorders, to *prohibit* the celebration of them.—Mons. Saurin has observed a *sarcasm* in this clause seldom attended to, as if it were insinuated here, They are called *απορρητα*, *Things not to be spoken of*; true, says the *apostle*, they are properly so; things not too sacred, but *too infamous* to be mentioned. See his *Sermons*, Vol. VIII. p. 198.

m *Awake, thou that sleepest*, &c.] Some think

most natural import of those well-known words in Isaiah (chap. lx. 1), "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee;" that is to say, the Messiah, represented by the glory of the Lord, shines in his church, shines upon the souls of particular persons; and then they arise as from the dead, and shake off their deep sleep; they rejoice in the light, they walk in it, and reflect it all around them, so that many others are awakened and transformed by it. SECT. ix. Ephes. V. 14.

IMPROVEMENT.

THE obligations which *as Christians* we lie under to cultivate *benevolence* and *purity*, are common to *all* countries and to *all* ages. Let us therefore frequently read over these plain exhortations, and solemnly charge our souls with their Divine authority and importance.

Let it not be enough to us that we carefully avoid *all bitterness and wrath, clamour and evil-speaking;* but let us cherish all the kind affections of *mutual love* and *tenderness*, and practice even the most difficult duties of *charity*, freely *forgiving* those that have injured us, as sensible how much greater offences *God has forgiven us;* always remembering whose *children* we are, and what engagements we are under to *imitate* our heavenly *Father;* and always setting before our eyes *the love of Christ*, who *gave himself for us*, and thereby *offered a most pleasing sacrifice to God.* Through him shall *our sacrifices* proceeding from the same principle *be acceptable* also to him, even the sacrifices of *alms*, of *prayer*, and of *praise.* Chap. iv. 31. 32 Chap. v. 1. 2

Let us not only abstain from the grossest *sensual indulgencies*, but from every thing *indecent* in our words and actions: and, that we may do so, let us *make a covenant*, not only *with our eyes* (Job xxxi. 1), but with *our hearts;* remembering, that it is *idolatry* in the sight of God to set our hearts upon the gross delights of *animal nature*, to the neglect and forgetfulness of his blessed Majesty; remembering also, that *the kingdom of Christ and of God* is 3, 4 5

think this passage is taken from an *apocryphal book* ascribed to Jeremiah, which, says the learned and eloquent Mons. *Saurin*, might really contain some *prophecies* delivered by him, and so by the way be quoted by Matthew (chap. xxvii. 9), who might know that the prophecy recorded by Zechariah (chap. xi. 12), was originally spoken or written by the elder prophet. (*Saurin, Serm.* Vol. X. p. 286.) But the sense of the passage before us is so fairly deducible from the words of Isaiah quoted in the *paraphrase*, that I do not see any necessity of having recourse to this supposition.

SECT. IX. is intended only for those who by *purity of heart* are qualified to see and enjoy him.

Ver. 6 Many false and *sophistical reasons* men have invented to palliate and excuse their vices: but if *the wrath of God* fall upon the *heathen* for these things, let us not imagine that *we* can practise them with impunity; and upon no account let us presume to be 7 *partakers with them* in their sins, that so we may not share with them in their punishment.

8 We are called *from darkness into light*, from the *darkness* of sin into the *light* of grace; let us remember then the happy state into which we are brought, and *walk as children of light*, having our conversation such as may be suitable to the character we bear, and to the obligations we are under by the advantages we enjoy: 10 and searching diligently *what is acceptable to the Lord*, let us discover and make known to all, that we *approve it* upon trial, by 9 our conforming to it, and bringing forth *the fruits* of *goodness*, *righteousness, and truth*, under the light and influence of *the Holy Spirit*, as those who have been savingly enlightened by him.

11 Let us avoid *the works of darkness*, not as *unfruitful* only, but as *mischievous* and destructive; and be careful that we do in no degree *partake of them*, not even so much as by a *sinful silence*, when Providence calls us *to reprove them:* but let us earnestly 13 pray for wisdom and grace, to order these *reproofs* in the wisest and happiest manner; that so we may, like that *light* of which we are *the children*, not only continue ourselves *unsullied* in the midst of pollution, but *make things manifest* in their proper co- 12 lours, and discountenance those indecencies, *the shame of which* will make *the very mention* of them odious to the renewed soul, while those that practise them are so far conscious of their vileness, as to endeavour to conceal them from the *light*, and draw a veil of *darkness* over them.

14 And O that the almighty voice of God may rouse up and *awaken* sinners *from their sleep*, and engage them to *arise from the dead*, that *Christ may give them light!* He is the great and only *Source of light* to sinful creatures, by whom it is sprung up on those who deserved to be consigned over to *chains of everlasting darkness.* Let us hail the rays of this *Sun of righteousness:* let us reflect them to his glory: and let it be our concern, that, being raised by him from the *sleep of sin*, we may spring up to *his service* with vigour, and prosecute it through all the remainder of our days with becoming gratitude and zeal.

SECT.

SECT. X.

The Apostle farther pursues his exhortations to a life of circumspection and usefulness, and to the constant exercise of temperance and devotion. Eph. V. 15—21.

EPHES. V. 15.
SEE then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise.

EPHESIANS V. 15.

SECT. X.

Ephes. V. 15.

I HAVE been urging you to consider yourselves as children of light, and upon this account to have your conversation such as becomes those who have been happily awakened from the sleep of sin by Christ: and to pursue the exhortation, as ye thus are brought from darkness into light, *see* to it *therefore that ye walk* as *accurately* and circumspectly as possible, taking the most attentive heed to every step, and conducting yourselves, *not as fools*, who consider not what they are doing, *but as wise men*, who know that they have pressing dangers to avoid, and most important ends to secure. And in particular let your wisdom be discovered in *redeeming the time*[a], endeavouring to recover and buy back as far as possible what has been lost, by diligently making use of what remains, and studying to improve it to the best and most valuable purposes; for which you should be careful to embrace the present opportunity, *because the days* we live in *are evil*, in which we are on every side surrounded with persecutions and perils, and God only knows how soon our liberty or our life may be taken away. *Wherefore* while these precarious blessings are continued, employ them for the honour of God, and the good of mankind; and *be not inconsiderate* and thoughtless as you formerly were, *but* be concerned to have a right discernment of your duty, and to be *understanding*

16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

16

17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding

17

a *Redeeming the time.*] Grotius and many other commentators explain this of the *caution* to be used in *avoiding persecution*, that so they might *draw out their time* as long as possibly they could, and not provoke their enemies to cut them off: compare Dan. ii. 8.—This to be sure was their duty, and it had been well if the zeal of some *primitive Christians* had regarded the precept in this sense. But I am persuaded *this interpretation* expresses only a *small part* of that *Christian diligence* and *prudence* to which the *apostle* meant to direct and exhort us.—Mons. *Saurin* observes, with his usual accuracy, that the word ἐξαγοραζόμενοι has a peculiar force, and implies (as the French word *racheter* and the English *redeem* also does) the *recovering what has been lost* (compare Gal. iii. 13; iv. 4, 5). And he apprehends there is an allusion to the *enormities* of their *heathen* life, in which so much former time had most unhappily been lost and thrown away. See his *Sermons*, Vol. VIII. p. 196, 197.

SECT. X.

Ephes. V. 17.

ing what [*is*] *the will of the* great *Lord* to whom you are devoted: endeavour to know your duty in all its extent, and knowing it to act agreeably to the obligations of it; declining those unnecessary dangers to which it is not his will that you should expose yourselves (Mat. x. 22), and diligently laying hold on every opportunity of service.

standing what the will of the Lord *is*.

18 *And*, that you may neither be insensible of the calls of duty, nor negligent of a due compliance with them, be continually careful that ye *be not*, even before you are aware, *drunk with wine*[b], *in which there is* so much danger of a dissolute *excess*[c], considering how grossly many abuse it, and abuse themselves by it, so as to run into all manner of extravagance and outrage, and into all that wild disorder and debauchery, for which the heathens are notorious at their idolatrous festivals: *but be ye filled*, as becomes your character, *with the Spirit* of God, and make it your concern to invite the quickening and the cheering influences of his grace, which are of so great moment in your Christian course; but which you will, by an excess of liquor, or any other gross sensualities, drive away from you, as he may be justly displeased with what is so directly opposite to his own pure and holy nature.

18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess: but be filled with the Spirit:

19 Let it be your endeavour therefore to engage the gracious visits of the Holy Spirit by the exercise of social devotion, in which he will delight to find you employed; and for which he will render you more and more fit, while in your cheerful moments you are *speaking to yourselves* and to each other *in* the *psalms* with which David and other inspired writers have furnished us, *and* in those new-composed *hymns* of praise, *and*

19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs,

b *Be not drunk with wine.*] It is highly probable that here may be a particular reference to those *dissolute ceremonies* called the *Bacchanalia*, that were celebrated by the heathens in honour of him whom they called *the god of wine*. While these rites continued, men and women made it a point of *religion* to *intoxicate themselves*, and ran about the streets, fields, and vineyards, *singing and shouting* in a wild and tumultuous manner; in opposition to which *extravagant vociferations* the use of devout *psalmody* is with great propriety recommended. Plato somewhere tells us that there was hardly *a sober person* to be found in the whole Attican territories during the continuance of these *detestable solemnities*.

c *In which there is excess.*] The word ασωτια implies, not only *exceeding the bounds of temperance*, which is the direct import of the English word, but that madness of *licentious riot* which is often the attendant of drunkenness. *Wine* is so frequently the cause of this, by the ungrateful abuse of the bounty of providence in giving it, that the *enormity* is represented by a very strong and beautiful *figure*, as contained in the *very liquor*.

d *Giving*

songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord:

and other *spiritual songs*, that is, songs on spiritual subjects, which the Spirit of God dictates and animates, with a variety adapted to the several occasions of the Christian life: and let it be your great care, that while you are thus tuning your voices, you be also *singing and chanting in your hearts to the Lord*, without which no external melody, be it ever so exact and harmonious, can be pleasing, to his ear. SECT. X. Ephes. V. 19.

20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

Yea, let there be a constant disposition for this duty, not only when you engage in social worship, but through the whole course of your lives; and let the mental songs, if I may so express it, that issue from the grateful sentiments of your hearts, be perpetual and uninterrupted; maintain a most affecting sense of the abundant matter which you have for praise, that, as new mercies are every hour descending upon you, ye may be *always giving thanks for all things*[d], for all the favours of God imparted to yourselves and others; and make it your employment at all times, not excepting your most afflicted moments, but filling even these with praise, and taking occasion from the tribulations and distresses with which a wise and gracious providence may exercise you, to acknowledge the Divine goodness which directs all these painful dispensations by views to your truest advantage: and, on the whole, let all your praises, in order to their being acceptable, be offered *in the* prevailing *name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to God even the Father;* who hath appointed him to sustain the character of the great Mediator, and is ready to receive the services we perform only in and through him. 20

21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

And, while you are thus careful in the duties of devotion to God, be not negligent in those which you owe to your fellow-creatures; but in all the various relations in which you stand, and the respective stations in which you are placed, *be subject to each other in the fear of God*[e]: let every 21

d *Giving thanks for all things.*] Dr. Barrow has given another important sense to these words, rendering them *for all persons;* as if the meaning were, "Consider yourselves as appointed to return to God the tribute of *praise* due from the *whole human race*, and address your daily thanksgivings to him for those blessings he is continually scattering down on your *fellow-Christians* and *fellow-creatures* in general." (See his *Works*, Vol. I. p. 257.) I have therefore in a few words hinted at this generous and noble thought, which is strongly expressed in that *excellent form* of *general thanksgiving* in the *English liturgy.*

e *Be subject to each other in the fear of God.*] The *apostle* offers here a *general exhortation* to the conscientious discharge of

SECT. X.

Ephes. V. 21.

every one of you, whether he be a superior or an inferior, endeavour to accommodate himself to the infirmities of those that are about him in a kind and respectful manner, so that if he be a superior he may not oppress, or if an inferior, he may not rebel. This I shall further illustrate by descending more particularly to the duties of husbands and wives, of parents and children, of masters and servants; upon a regular attention to which so much of the order and comfort of society, and so much of the credit of Christianity with respect to its professors, apparently depends.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 15 WHO can read the *exhortation* which we first meet with in this short but important *section*, without seeing cause for the deepest humiliation on account of his own *careless* and *inconsiderate* behaviour? Alas, the *wisest* have their intervals of *folly*; and they who *walk* the most *accurately* are not without their *heedless* steps. In how many instances are our thoughts *dissipated*, and how frequently are we *quite forgetful* of ourselves and our God! neither *watching* for opportunities of doing good, nor *guarding* against temptations to sin; but suffering the one to pass by us *unimproved*, and the other to seize us *unprovided* for resistance.

16 That *precious time*, on the right management of which *eternity* depends, and in the improvement of every day and hour of which, it is manifest, that at least *the degree* of our *everlasting happiness* is interested; that *time* which thousands on a dying bed, or in the invisible state, would gladly *redeem* at the price of the whole world; how little do we think of the *value* of it, and to what *trifles* are we daily sacrificing it! Yea, to what *trifles* do we not sacrifice it! In the several *divisions* of it, when we come seriously to

of *relative duties*, from which he afterwards proceeds to the *particular* consideration of the several *relations* of *husbands and wives*, of *parents and children*, and of *masters and servants*; which he might rather choose to insist on, as some were ready to imagine that *Christian converts* were released from any further obligation to those who still continued in a state of heathenism, and might consider the relation as dissolved between them. (Compare 1 Cor. vii. 10—24, and 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2.) The *apostle* therefore presses it upon them, in whatever station they were placed to shew a due regard to *relative duties*, and to remember, that *Christian privileges* did by no means excuse them from the *duties* resulting from *natural* and *civil* relations of life, but rather did enforce the obligation they were under to observe them. And if *these duties* were incumbent upon Christians towards *relations* of all kinds, even though they bore the character of *unbelievers*, much more were they engaged to practise them towards such as were *related* to them, not only by the ties of *nature* or of *civil institution*, but by the more endearing bonds of *grace*.

to reflect on the *morning*,—the *forenoon*,—the *afternoon*,—and the *evening*,—how remiss are we in the proper business of *each!* So that if the *great business* for which we were sent into the world, to *understand what is the will of the Lord*, and act according to it, be not, as there is reason to conclude in many instances it is, *entirely neglected*, it is performed in a manner *shamefully remiss* and indifferent. SECT. X. Ver. 17

If we are not *drunk with wine, in which there is* an *excess* (from which, to the shame of *Christianity*, the followers of *Mahomet* totally abstain with resolute self-denial, far more easily than *Christians* keep themselves within the limits of sober temperance), yet how frequently are we quite *intoxicated with pleasure*, in which we forget the dignity of our nature, and the rules of our profession! And how seldom are we breathing after that quickening *Spirit* which alone can effectually remedy these disorders! 18

If our voices are employed in *singing* the praises of God in our *public assemblies* (where, nevertheless, so many are constantly silent), or if we practise it in our families, how little are our *hearts* engaged!—How seldom doth God receive any *cheerful* sacrifice of *praise* from us, even in our most *prosperous* circumstances! And how much less *in every thing!*—Where is the person that can say, "*In the night is my song unto thee?* amidst the darkness and distress of *affliction* I still praise thee, *though* thou correctest me, yea *because* thou correctest me with such paternal wisdom and love?" 19 20

And, to conclude these *melancholy* reflections, How little *subjection* is there *to each other* in the various relations of human life! and where there is any of it, how much more frequently doth it proceed from *other* considerations than from *the fear of God*, and a religious regard to his injunctions! Yet these that have been mentioned are commands established by a Divine authority; and there is not a *Christian* in any age, country, or station, who is not by his profession solemnly obliged to observe them. 21

What shall we say then on the whole, but this? *We lie down in our shame, and confusion covers us, because we have sinned against the Lord our God;* (Jer. iii. 25.) And what counsel can be given to remedy these things, but this? *If any man lack wisdom*, of which these are some of the most important precepts, *let him ask it of God, who giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth none* with those instances of former folly which they sincerely lament, and which they labour to amend. (James i. 5.)

SECT.

SECT. XI.

The Apostle recommends it to husbands to love their wives in imitation of Christ's love to the church, and presses upon wives the correspondent duty of conjugal subjection. Eph. V. 22, *to the end.*

EPHESIANS V. 22.

SECT. XI.

Ephes. V. 22.

I HAVE been recommending to you a mutual subjection to each other in the several relations of life, as a general precept of that holy religion in which you are instructed by the gospel; and I shall now proceed to illustrate it by descending to some particulars. And, to begin with the relation between husbands and wives, I would first exhort you that are *wives*[a], that ye *be subject* with all humility and gentleness of submission *unto your own husbands*, not only from a principle of love and respect to them, but *as* a proof of your fidelity and regard *unto the Lord*, who has seen fit to place you in a state of subordination, and commanded you to be under obedience: (1 Cor. xiv. 34.) *For the husband is* by Divine constitution *the head of the wife*, and so is invested with the superior character, *even as* the Lord Jesus *Christ is the Head of the church*, which is committed to his care and government: *and*, standing in this near relation to it, *he* has shewn the greatest concern and affection for it, and *is* become *the Saviour of the body*, employing his authority for the most important and benevolent purposes, not only to deliver us from evil, but to supply us with all good, in such a manner as to make it manifest that our salvation and happiness depend upon our union with him and subjection to him. And this may hint at the kind purposes to which the superiority of the husband over the wife should be improved, in manifesting a concern for the defence and safety, and for the benefit and comfort of the wife:

EPHES. V. 22.

WIVES, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the church: and he is the Saviour of the body.

24 Therefore as the church

[a] *I would first exhort you that are wives.*] It is observable, that in the several *exhortations* given here to the practice of *relative duties* (as likewise in Col. iii. 18, *to the end*, and iv. 1), the *apostle* first begins with the lower relations of *wives*, and *children*, and *servants*, before he proceeds in each of these instances to those of *husbands*, and *parents*, and *masters*; which it is probable he might do, because the duties of *inferiors* are commonly most apt to be objected to, as what are thought most difficult to be complied with; and where these are well and faithfully performed, the correspondent duties of *superiors* will be more readily attended to, and more effectually secured.

church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing.

wife: but I now mention it in the former view, and *therefore as the church is subject unto Christ*, and with a cheerful willingness submits to his authority, *so also* [*let*] *wives* [*be*] subject *to their own husbands in every thing* in which their commands are not inconsistent with those of Christ, who is the Head of both. SECT. xi. Ephes. V. 24.

25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

Yet far be it from me to insinuate any thing 25
that should encourage tyranny and usurpation in the husband; that equitably kind and generous Lord, who ought to be considered as a perfect model, hath by his own example taught a very different lesson. And therefore, on the other hand, I would exhort you that are *husbands*, that ye be sure to *love your wives* with constant tenderness and fidelity, *even as Christ also hath loved the church:* and O how astonishing is that love, and how delightful is it to reflect upon it! For such is the affectionate regard that he hath manifested to the church, that he hath been pleased, when it was in a state of slavery and misery, to purchase it to himself at the most expensive price, *and hath* even *given himself* as a ransom

26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water, by the word,

for it; That, having paid the price of its re- 26
demption by his blood, *he might sancify* it by his Spirit, *and cleanse it with the washing of water* in baptism and so having purged it from the guilt and pollution of sin, might form it for himself, and train it up in the exercise of every

27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy

grace, *by the* discipline of his *word* [b]: *That*, 27
being thus purified, educated, and adorned, as a bride prepared and adorned for her husband, (Rev. xxi. 2,) *he might* in due time receive it up to glory, and *place it in his* own immediate *presence a glorious church*, arrayed in perfect righteousness, and free from all remains of sin, *not having spot or wrinkle, or any thing of that nature* [c] which could be called a blemish; *but that*

b *With the washing of water by the word.*] I apprehend here is an *allusion* to the methods taken in *eastern* countries to *purify the virgins*, that were to be presented to the royal embrace; (compare Esth. ii. 3, 9, 12; and Ezek xvi. 7—14.) And no doubt proper care was also taken to *cultivate their minds*, and form them to such knowledge as might render them more fit to become the *dignity* intended for them; which was the more necessary, as some of those who appeared as *candidates* on such occasions were of low birth and education.

c *Not having spot or wrinkle, or any thing of that nature.*] How bright an idea does this give us of the grand plan and design of Christianity, to bring all the millions of which the *church* consists to such a state of *perfect virtue* and *glory*, that when the penetrating eye of Christ, its great and holy Bridegroom, shall survey it, there shall not be one *spot or wrinkle*, or *any thing like it*, in the least to impair its beauty, or offend his sight! Where is such a *scheme or thought* to be found in the world, but in the New Testament, and those who have been taught by it?

d *Answerably*

SECT. XI.

Ephes. V. 27.

that in every part and member of it *it should be holy and without blame*, and he might thus survey it completely pure, beautiful, and resplendent, in that great day, when the whole number of his elect shall be gathered together, and the marriage of the Lamb shall be celebrated amidst the acclamations of the heavenly legions to whose blissful world his bride shall be conducted in triumph.

holy and without blemish.

28 But to return to the subject from which this pleasing digression hath led me; such is the nearness of the relation I am speaking of, that *husbands ought so to love their wives as* they love *their own bodies:* and when we consider that the bond of marriage makes them both one, and remember what an inseparable community of interests it establishes, we may truly say, That *he that loveth his wife loveth himself*, and he that permits his affections to be alienated from her, knows little of his own true happiness.

28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself.

29 And this must surely have its weight with every considerate person; *for no man* in his senses *ever yet hated his own flesh*, whatever its infirmities or imperfections were, *but nourisheth and cherisheth it*, providing not only for the sustenance of it, but for its comfortable accommodation; *even as the Lord* nourisheth and cherisheth *the church*, supplying it with all things that may conduce to its welfare and happiness, with a tender concern for its infirmities, looking upon it as one with himself:

29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

30 *For* it is a most certain, as well as delightful truth that he regards it in this view, and that *we are* esteemed by him as *members of his body*, united to him by one spirit, and therefore considered like Eve, when just taken out of Adam's side, (Gen. ii. 23,) as making a part *of his flesh, and of his bones;* whom therefore he would no more permit to be separated from him, than a man would be willing to lose a vital part of himself.

30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

31 Now *answerably to this* [d], it is undoubtedly fit, that (as Adam was divinely inspired to declare [e] on the first view of that delightful relation of which I now speak) all other ties should yield to this: so that, according as it follows there, (Gen.

31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his

d *Answerably to this.*] This is the exact import of the phrase ἀντὶ τούτου which might also be rendered [*on the other hand,*] that is, taking the matter in a different but correspondent view.

e Adam was divinely inspired to declare.] See note d no Matt. xix. 5, Vol. VII. 95. as to the reason there is to conclude that Adam spake this in consequence of some extraordinary *Divine illumination.*

f *This*

his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

(Gen. ii. 24,) " *A man shall leave his father and mother, and be* inseparably *joined to his wife, and they*, though originally and naturally *two* persons, *shall* for the future *be one flesh*; shall be considered as one person, and, as it were, one soul in two bodies. SECT. xi. Ephes. V. 31.

32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

This is indeed *a great mystery* [f], which was long unknown, and now it is in some measure discovered, is a matter of much admiration; *but* you will easily perceive, that in saying this, *I speak* not of the union between a man and his wife, but *of* that between *Christ and the church:* for that the Son of God should unite himself to a society of mortal men, and regard them as making a part of himself, on account of the intimacy with which they are joined to him in a community of Spirit and of interest, can indeed never be sufficiently admired. 32

33 Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife *see* that she reverence *her* husband.

Nevertheless, you will not, I hope forget the occasion which led me to touch upon this pleasing subject: I therefore renew the exhortation, and say, *Let every one of you in particular so love his wife, even as himself*, with such a cordial and sincere affection as he bears to himself; *and* let *the wife* [*see*] *that she reverence* [*her*] *husband*, and be subject to him, not only as a necessary duty, but as led to it by affectionate choice, regarding him with inward respect and esteem, as well as paying him the honour of external obedience. 33

IMPROVEMENT.

LET the *love* of our blessed *Redeemer to his church* be daily celebrated with the most cordial gratitude, and that infinite condescension adored, by which he hath been pleased *to unite us to himself* in such dear and inseparable bonds. *He is the Saviour* Ver. 23 *of*

f *This is a great mystery.*] Dr. Whitby thinks this refers to a *tradition* among the Jews, that the marriage of Adam with Eve was a type of the union between the Messiah and the *church*; and several remarkable passages of that kind have been produced. Bishop *Burnet* interprets this expression, as if it were designed to signify, that this was *a mystical argument* of the main point the apostle was intent upon proving, that is, the *union* of the Jews and Gentiles in one church, since otherwise Christ being espoused to each might seem in a state of polygamy. (See *Burnet on the Articles*, p. 264. But this conceit is so far fetched, and the *interpretation* given in the paraphrase is so easy, that one would wonder so many difficulties should be raised on so obvious a point. The *mystery* certainly was, that the eternal *Son of God*, receiving the degenerate race of men into an union with himself, should have *loved* them with an affection exceeding that which is to be found among the most intimate *human relations*. This sublime doctrine had long been concealed, and cannot now be perfectly comprehended; and therefore may with the greatest propriety be called a *mystery* in every sense of the word.

SECT. XI.

of the body; and O, in how wonderful a manner is he become so! *He hath given himself for us,* hath brought us from servitude and misery at the expence of his own life, *and hath washed us from our sins in his own blood,* as well *as cleansed us in* the laver of *bap-tismal water*; and intending us for the eternal displays of his love, as well as for the participation of his glory, *he hath sanctified us* by his Spirit, and formed us for *it by his word,* and thus is preparing us for that blessed day, *when the whole body of his elect* shall be brought forth, *as the bride the Lamb's wife,* to those *public espousals,* which shall have their consummation in complete and everlasting happiness. O *what a noble and illustrious day!* when the eye of *Christ* shall survey all the *millions* of his people, *and placing them in his presence as one with himself,* shall look with full complacency and delight on all the various members of that *glorious church,* and behold *neither spot nor wrinkle, nor any such thing,* but all comely, fair, and lovely, all answering that perfect idea which he had formed, and that scheme which he had laid for raising them by perfect holiness to perfect felicity. In the mean time, let us think with delight on the proofs that he gives of his constant love. *He nourishes and cherishes his church;* and with the most affectionate regard is tender of it, as we are of *the members of our own body, of our flesh, and of our bones.* O that we may have a more sensible communion with him as our great *Head,* and may derive more continual influences from him!

Ver. 25 26 27 29 30

For his sake let us *love one another;* and let those who are joined in the *conjugal relation* often consider it in the view in which it is here represented. *Let husbands* see to it, that their *love to their wives* bear some resemblance to that which *Christ* avows to the *church: let wives pay a reverence to their husbands;* like that which the *church* is to pay to *Christ;* and let both take care to maintain that *wisdom and sanctity* in the whole of their behaviour, which may suit the *relation* which they bear to each other in their common *Head,* as well as render their intimate *alliance happy,* which it can never be but by an *union of hearts* as well as *of hands.*—Vain will it be to think of *dividing* their interests, when their persons are thus *joined* in such a manner as to become *one flesh.* And can there be a stronger argument to the most tender love! *He that loveth his wife, loveth himself:* she that loveth her husband, and from love obeys him, *loveth herself too:* and every instance of *unkindness* on the one hand, or the other, is but arming *the members* with weapons against *the head,* or employing *the head* in contrivances against *the members.*

Ver. 25 33 24 31 28

SECT.

SECT. XII.

The Apostle urges the mutual duties of children and parents, and of servants, and masters, enforcing each of them with proper arguments. Eph. VI. 1—9.

EPHES. VI. 1. CHILDREN, obey, your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

EPHESIANS VI. 1. SECT. XII.

HAVING spoken of the relative duties of husbands and wives, I now proceed to mention other relations arising from them, and particularly that between parents and children. And here I would exhort you that are *children*, that with becoming duty and respect ye *obey your parents*, attending to the instructions of your father, and not forsaking the law of your mother (Prov. i. 8); out of regard to the subjection that you owe them *in the Lord*, and in compliance with the authority of Christ: *for this is right* and reasonable in itself, as a just debt to those who are the instruments of your being, and to whose care and kindness you are so much obliged; and will be also beneficial in its consequences, as it is certain that parents in general are more capable of directing their children than they are of governing themselves. And as it is proper and expedient in itself, so it was also expressly commanded by God in that short summary of moral precepts which he uttered on mount Sinai, and engraved with his own finger on the tables of stone; where you know it was said, *Honour thy father and* [*thy*] *mother*, enjoining you to regard them as your superiors with all duty and obedience, and cheerfully to afford them relief and maintenance if they should stand in need of it; *which*, by the way you may observe, *is the first commandment* that is attended *with* a special *promise*[a]: For it is added there,

Ephes. VI. 1.

2 Honour thy Father and mother, (which is the first commandment with promise,) 2

3 That it may be well 3

a *Which is the first commandment with promise.*] The church of Rome would from hence argue, that *the second commandment*, which forbids the worship of *images*, having a promise added to it of God's *shewing mercy to thousands of them that love him, and keep his commandments*, can be no longer obligatory under the gospel, since *this*, which relates to *honouring parents*, is said to be *the first commandment with promise*. But it is easy to discern the fallacy and weakness of this argument, as what is annexed to *the second commandment* apparently relates to the whole law, and is *a general declaration* of the mercy God would shew to those who kept, not only *that*, but all his commandments; while *this* of which the *apostle* speaks is really *the first* and only precept of the decalogue that has *a particular promise* annexed to it, peculiar to itself.

b *That*

SECT. XII.

there, *that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest be long-lived upon the earth*[b]; which words express the peculiar care of the Divine Providence for the continuance and comfort of the lives of those who should observe this precept, the benefit of which those children might generally expect who were dutiful to their parents: and though under the gospel the promise of temporal blessings be not so express and peremptory, yet even now it may be cheerfully expected that God will bless such children in a very visible manner; and he assuredly will do it, so far as temporal prosperity may on the whole be subservient to their truest and highest interest.

Ephes. VI. 3.

that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

4 *And*, on the other hand, ye parents, and, more especially, *ye fathers*, let me beseech you, that ye *provoke not your children* by a rigorous severity, and be particularly careful not to exasperate their angry passions by an overbearing and tyrannical behaviour, lest by this means you should excite them to such a secret indignation, as may make it difficult for them *to* restrain those expressions of *wrath* which in such a relation would be very indecent; and, among other ill consequences of such a conduct, there is great reason also to conclude that it would naturally prejudice them against Christianity, and thus would bring upon yourselves a share in the guilt of their disobedience and their ruin: *but*, on the contrary, let me exhort you to *educate them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*[c], under such discipline and instruction as may lead them to the knowledge of the religion of Christ, and most effectually dispose them to profess and practise

4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

b *That thou mayest be long-lived upon the earth.*] It is observed by Dr. Whitby and others, that the *apostle* does not say,—*upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee*, that he might not encourage a vain hope in the Jews of continuing in the land of Canaan. But when it is considered, that those whom he was writing to were chiefly *Gentile converts*, the clause would very properly be omitted in this view, as it must better suit the case of the whole church to express the promise in a general way.

c *In the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*] By the word παιδεια, which we render *nurture*, as distinguished from νουθεσια Κυριυ, *the admonition of the Lord*, some think may be intended such a *knowledge* of books, men, and things, as may fit them to appear in life with honour and usefulness. But as they stand connected, and the word Κυριυ may refer to both, it seems more reasonable to explain these terms of such a course of *discipline* and *instruction* as properly belongs to a *religious education*, which ought to be employed in forming them for *the Lord*, by laying a restraint upon the first appearances of every vicious passion, and *nourishing them up in the words of faith and of good doctrine* (1 Tim. iv. 6), in which respect I cannot but take this occasion to say *catechising* has been found to be of excellent use, though it be now so much neglected.

practise it; which it is certainly of great importance that you should attend to in their earliest years, and before ill habits render them stubborn and intractable. SECT. XII. Ephes. VI. 4.

5 Servants, be obedient to them that are *your* masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your hearts, as unto Christ:

There is yet another relation between masters and servants, concerning which I shall proceed to advise you: and as I would not neglect those of the lowest character in life, on whose conduct much of the credit of religion may depend; I would exhort you therefore who are *servants*, whether of the meanest rank, such as bondmen and slaves, or in the station only of hired servants, that ye *be subject* and obedient *to* those who are [*your*] *masters* and proprietors, though they be only so *according to the flesh*; while there is still a superior Lord of your spirits, whose authority is to set bounds to theirs, and never must in any case be violated to please them, or even to preserve your own lives, when most in their power: but in all lawful things whatever, see that you maintain a becoming subjection to them, performing what they order you *with fear and trembling*, as those who would be cautious of giving offence, or of bringing a reproach on your profession, by any unfaithfulness or negligence in their affairs; discharging your duty to them *in the simplicity* and uprightness *of your heart, as unto Christ*, with that sincerity and uniformity of conduct which a regard to Christ will require and produce: Acting in all things, *not with eye-service* only, without attending to their business any further than while their eye is upon you, *as* if it were your only aim to be *men-pleasers*[d], and to secure the favour of your masters; *but as* those who are *the servants of Christ* by your Christian profession, and required by him to serve your master with fidelity, *doing the will of God from the soul*, with a sincere desire above all things of approving yourselves to his all-seeing eye. And thus let it appear that you make conscience of your duty, and apply to it with a willing mind; performing

5

6 Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.

6

7 With good-will doing

7

d *Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers.*] Grotius takes notice of the elegance of the *compound words* made use of here in the *original* (μη κατ' οφθαλμοδουλειαν ως ανθρωπαρεσκοι), which our *translators* have endeavoured to imitate. But as the Greek abounds more in such *compound words* than any other language, so the apostle Paul has frequently introduced them in his writings with a peculiar elegance and beauty, of which it is apparent that the best *translation* must in many instances fall very short. Compare Rom. ii. 11; 2 Cor. vi. 14; Col. ii. 4; 1 Tim. i. 6; 2 Tim. i. 6; ii. 15, *Gr.* and see *Blackwall's Sacr. Class.* Vol. I. p. 239.

e *Forbearing*

SECT. XII.

ing all the business of your station *with* a cheerful readiness and *good-will*, and *doing service* with a benevolent alacrity, in such a manner as to shew that you respect and love your masters, and have their interest at heart, *as* being ultimately influenced by a view *to* the approbation and honour of *the Lord, and not* by a regard *to* those tokens of favour you may receive from *men: Knowing* assuredly, and making it the governing maxim of your lives, *that whatsoever good any man doth*, in one station of life or another, *he shall receive* a proportionable, though infinitely gracious reward for *the same*, from the hand *of the Lord* as his final Judge; and this, *whether* [*he be*] *a slave, or a freeman*, whether he be the meanest servant, or the greatest prince: for he is the universal Guardian and Protector of his people, and esteems men, not according to their stations in the world, but according to their behaviour in those stations, whether high or low.

Ephes. VI. 7.

doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:

8 Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free.

9 *And*, on the other hand, *ye* that are lords and *masters*, let me exhort you, that ye *do the same to them*, and always act on the same equitable principles, not only with respect to those who are your hired servants, but even to them that are your slaves, and belong to you as your absolute property, so that according to human laws you may dispose of their persons and their lives as you please: but howsoever mean and low their station be, remember the common bond of humanity, by which you are united to them; remember the peculiar obligations of Christians to distinguished benevolence and goodness, to all with whom you have to do; and therefore govern them with moderation and gentleness of temper, *forbearing* not only cruel and dangerous blows, but all severe and rigorous *threatening*[c], and every thing of an over-hasty and tyrannical conduct; and treat them in the same generous and upright manner as you would have them act towards you, as *knowing that ye yourselves also have a* superior Lord and *Master in the heavens*, whose authority over you is much greater and more absolute, than yours over any of

9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there

c *Forbearing threatening.*] To explain this, as some have done, as if it only signified *remitting the evil threatened*, falls far short of the *apostle's* meaning, if I at all understand it; as a charge given to *forbear* all passionate and *menacing expressions* towards *servants*, is of a more extensive nature, and calls for greater generosity and mildness than *not to punish them* so severely as they before had threatened them.

there respect of persons with him.

of your fellow-creatures: *and*, whatsoever difference there may be in your stations, *there is no respect of persons with him!* but he will administer the most strict and impartial justice, and shew that he remembers the cry of the oppressed, though men may consider them, on account of the inferiority of their circumstances, as below their regards.

SECT. XII.

Ephes. VI. 9.

IMPROVEMENT.

IT is matter of thankful acknowledgment, that God condescends in his word to give us *particular instructions*, suited to the circumstances in which we are respectively placed. *Children* and *servants* are not forgotten. Let them attend to those gracious lessons which are here given by the *supreme Parent* and *Master*, who while he teaches them, *pleads their cause*, and interposes his high authority to vindicate them from oppression and abuse. Ver.

Much of the happiness of society evidently depends on the temper and conduct of those who are placed in these *lower relations*. Let *children* therefore learn to be *subject to their parents* with all dutiful and humble respect, from a sense of the *reasonableness* of the command, and of the *goodness* which has annexed *such a promise* to it: a promise which shall still be efficacious, so far as *long life* would be indeed a blessing to a pious child. 1, 2, 3

Let *servants*, with all godly *simplicity* and uprightness *of heart*, revere the authority of *Christ* in them that are *their masters according to the flesh*; and exercise a good conscience towards them upon all occasions, not only when *under their eye*, but in their absence; well knowing that God is *always present*, and always attentive to the conduct of every rational creature in whatsoever rank. Let them cherish that inward *good-will* and *benevolence* of heart, which renders every act of *service* uniform and steady, and makes it in a degree *obliging*, even when performed by those from whom authority might have extorted it. And let the certain and important *reward* that will assuredly follow *every good action*, whether great or small, and whether performed by persons in more elevated or inferior stations of life, animate us all to a zealous diligence in well-doing, whatever discouragement may at present attend us. 5, 6, 7, 8

And as to those who bear the *superior relations* in life, let them remember, that the command of a much higher *parent* and *lord* requires also of them a tender regard to their *inferiors*. Let *parents* therefore govern *their own passions*, that they may not *terrify* and oppress the *tender spirits* of their *children*; or if they are 4

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Ver. otherwise than *tender*, may not *teach them an evil lesson against themselves*, and by their own example strengthen them in those *excesses* which may be a disgrace and detriment to the *family*, and may, when age has broken all the vigour of the parents, *bring down their grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.* A conscientious care to *educate* and train them up *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*, if duly attended to, will teach a better conduct, and *the meekness and gentleness of Christ* will have an happy influence on both.

9 And, finally, let the thoughts of that great impartial *Master in heaven* awe *masters* on earth; and the expectation, the certain expectation of giving an account to him, engage them to make the *yoke of servitude*, which God has been pleased to lay on those who are nevertheless *their brethren*, as *light* and *easy* as they can; choosing, even when they might *command with authority*, rather *with love to entreat;* not doing or saying any thing unnecessarily rigorous or *severe*, *not threatening*, reviling, or reproaching, but treating *their servants* as those whom they consider as partakers with them in the *same hope*, or whom they earnestly desire by all prudent condescension and tenderness to lead into the way of salvation.

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The Apostle concludes the epistle with urging them to prepare for a strenuous combat with their spiritual enemies, by putting on the whole armour of God; and earnestly exhorting them to fervency in prayer, he recommends himself to their remembrance at the throne of grace. Eph. VI. 10, *to the end.*

EPHESIANS VI. 10.

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I HAVE been exhorting you to a faithful performance of relative duties, and *as to what remains, my brethren*, since every relation in life brings along with it correspondent duties, and will require vigour and resolution in the discharge of them, whatever therefore be the circumstance or situation you are in, let me beseech you, not to rely on your own strength, but *be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might*, confide in his omnipotent protection, and fix your dependance on the grace he is so ready to communicate to us, to support us in every service and struggle to which we are called.

Ephes. VI. 10

EPHES. VI. 10.

FINALLY, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

11 And since it is a strenuous warfare in which you are

11 Put on the whole armour

armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

are engaged, *put on the complete armour of God*[a], that glorious dress so necessary for you, and so conducive to your ornament and safety; *that ye may*, in consequence of it, *be able to stand against* all *the* subtile methods and *artifices of the devil*, against all the ambushes he may lay for you, and all the rage and fury with which he may attack you. SECT. xiii. Ephes. VI. 11.

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*.

For, in the warfare we are carrying on, *our* 12 *struggle* and contention *is not with flesh and blood* alone; not merely with human adversaries, however powerful, subtile, and cruel; not only with the remaining corruptions of animal nature, which often give us such painful exercise: *but* we are called to wrestle and contend *with* sagacious and mighty spirits, once ranked among celestial *principalities*, though now degraded by their apostacy to be chiefs in hell; and *with powers*, that employ their utmost strength to ruin us, and that still keep their regular subordination, that their efforts of mischief may be more effectual: we contend *with* those who are *the rulers of the darkness of this* age and *world*[b], who have long usurped a dominion over it, and who in the present age hold men in the chains of hereditary superstition and destructive errors, which have been delivered down to them through many succeeding generations; and *with spirits* who became authors and abettors *of wickedness* even while they abode *in heavenly* [*places*[c]], where

a *The complete armour of God.*] The word in the *original* is πανοπλια, which includes *all sorts of armour*, whether offensive or defensive; consisting in the exercise of *all those Christian graces* which we are furnished with *by God*, to be made use of *in his strength*, as well to annoy the enemy as to defend ourselves: and it appears by the particular description which the *apostle* here proceeds to give of it, to be *a suit of armour* every way *complete*, and properly adapted to the defence of *every part*; though, as some observe, none is provided for *the back*, as we must always *face the enemy*, or we shall presently lie open and have no defence from danger.

b *The rulers of the darkness of this world.*] This and the following clause Dr. Whitby explains in his *paraphrase*, "of those *evil spirits* that *rule* in the heathen nations which are yet in *darkness*," and "of those that have *their stations in the* regions of the *air*." But I do not see any foundation for such a distinction, and therefore have not intimated it in the *paraphrase*.

c *Spirits of wickedness in heavenly* [*places.*] There is somewhat peculiar in the form of the expression in the *original*, τα πνευματικα της πονηριας εν τοις επουρανιοις, which Mr. Locke has paraphrased, "the spiritual managers of the opposition to the kingdom of God." There is no doubt but it refers to those revolted *wicked spirits* who are continually employed in propagating *wickedness*. But Dr. *Goodwin* would render the last words, εν τοις επουρανιοις, *about heavenly things*, as signifying, that we *wrestle with them* to secure to ourselves those spiritual and eternal *blessings* of which they would endeavour to deprive us. (See his *Works*, Vol. I. p. 45.) I have hinted at this, but cannot think it *a proper translation*: the connexion and *version* I have followed seems much more natural and

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where they rebelled against the God of heaven, and drew in multitudes, who were before holy and happy spirits, to take part with them in their ungrateful and impious revolt. With these are we struggling for that great celestial prize which they have for ever lost; and their nature, experience, and situation, give them most formidable advantages against the weak children of men, surrounded with so many examples of evil, and with such powerful temptations to it. *On this account* then let me pursue my exhortation, that ye would *take unto you the complete armour of God, that* so *ye may be able to withstand* all these strong and malicious enemies *in the evil day* of extremest danger; *and having done all,* having exerted yourselves to the utmost, which indeed it will be absolutely necessary for you to do, ye may be found at last, when your warfare is accomplished, *to stand* victorious and triumphant.

Ephes. VI. 12.

13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Stand therefore in a constant readiness for the encounter, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, *having your loins girded about with* the strictest *truth*[d], uprightness and sincerity of heart, which will give a steadiness and uniformity to your conduct, and serve, as a girdle does, to brace on the other parts of your armour, and keep them all in their proper places: *and putting on the breast-plate of* universal *righteousness*, or a constant regard to the practice of holiness in the sight of God, and of justice and integrity in the whole of your dealings with your fellow-creatures, which, like a breast-plate, will defend your vitals against many a dangerous thrust of the enemy: *And having your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace*[e], with that peaceful

14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness;

15 And your feet shod with the preparation

and easy: "They were *wicked in heaven*, and by that *wickedness* fell from thence."

d *Having your loins girded about with truth.*] It has often been observed, that *the military girdle* was not only an *ornament* but a *defence;* as it hid the gaping *joints of the armour*, and kept them close and steady, as well as fortified *the loins* of those that wore it, and rendered them more vigorous and fit for action.——The chief difficulty here is to know, whether *truth* refers to the *true principles* of religion, or to *integrity* in our conduct; and how, on the latter interpretation to keep it distinct from the *breast-plate of righteousness*, or on the former from *the shield of faith.* But it seems probable to me, that it may rather signify some *virtue of the mind*, as all the other parts of the armour enumerated do; and then it must refer to that *uprightness* and sincerity of intention, which produces *righteousness*, or an holy and equitable conduct, as its proper fruit.

e *The preparation of the gospel of peace.*] Mr. Locke understands by this, "an habitual *readiness* to walk in the way of the gospel of peace," as if it were intended as a *general* injunction to obey all its precepts. But to me it evidently appears to be designed in a *particular* manner to point out the *preparation* which the *gospel* makes for our defence, by that *peaceful temper* which it so often teaches and inculcates; of which, as I take it to be the sense

of

ration of the gospel of peace ;

peaceful and benevolent temper which is so much recommended by the gospel as an essential part of the Christian character, and which like the boots worn by soldiers, will bear you unhurt through the many difficulties and trials which like sharp pointed thorns, may lie in your way, and dangerously obstruct your progress : SECT. xiii. Ephes. VI. 15.

16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked :

And *upon all* [*these*] *taking* to yourselves *the* impenetrable *shield of* a steady *faith* in the great promises and principles of the gospel [f], *whereby* if it be kept in lively exercise, *ye shall be able* effectually *to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one* [g], those furious suggestions which he may sometimes discharge into the mind, like so many envenomed arrows or darts, which kindle by the swiftness of their passage ; 16

17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God :

And take also *the helmet of salvation*, that cheerful hope of complete deliverance and eternal happiness, which will cover your head in the day of battle, and give you a well-grounded boldness and confidence, which will greatly conduce to your success ; *and* brandish in your hands *the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*, those declarations of his word and gospel which his Spirit has inspired, and by a firm confidence in which you will be able, not only to defend yourselves, but to repel your adversaries. 17

18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication

And, finally, to add efficacy to all these, be *continually praying* ; make it a constant part of your daily work, and be frequently amidst all your 18

of the place, I have explained it in the *paraphrase* ; though others choose to understand it of that *confidence* which is inspired by the *gospel* in consequence of the *peace* it establishes between God and the soul.

f *Upon all* [*these*] *taking the shield of faith.*] Our *translators* render it [*above all* ;] but as [*upon*] answers best to the particle επι here used, so it best expresses the *allusion* to the situation of *the shield* as covering the other pieces of *armour* ; which has here a beautiful propriety, as *truth, righteousness*, and *peace*, are sheltered (as it were) by *faith*, from the assaults which otherwise might overbear them.

g *To quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.*] Dr. *Goodwin*, and many others, suppose that the *apostle* here refers to an ancient custom still prevailing among the Indians and other *barbarous* nations, to dip their *arrows* in the blood or gall of *asps* and *vipers*, or other *poisonous* preparations, which *fire the blood* of those who are wounded with them, occasion exquisite pain, and make the least wound mortal ; and some Greek writers tell us, that it was usual for soldiers to have *shields* made of *raw hides*, which immediately *quenched* them. (See *Goodwin's Child of Light*, p. 101.)—It is also certain, that some *arrows* were discharged with so great a velocity that they *fired in their passage* : but though in common cases this could seldom happen, nor would there thus be much probability of their reaching the mark, yet I have hinted at it in the *paraphrase* in allusion to the sudden and surprising violence of Satanical suggestions.—Missile weapons, with *burning flax* wrapped about them, were likewise sometimes used (see *Raphel. ex Herod, in loc.)* ; but this was chiefly to *fire places*, and not in the attack of persons alone.

h *Watching.*

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your labours and cares lifting up your hearts to God in holy ejaculations, joined *with all* kind of *prayer and supplication in the* fervency of your own spirits, under the influence of that Divine *Spirit* which resides in you, to quicken your hearts, and which will engage you never to rest contented in outward forms of unmeaning and hypocritical devotion; *and* as you desire it may be effectual, be still *watching thereunto with all perseverance* [h], and importunate ardor of mind, joining to these petitions such earnest intercession *and* affectionate *supplication for all the saints*, as the principles of our religion dictate, and as may suit the relations, in which we respectively stand.

Ephes. VI. 18.

supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance, and supplication for all saints;

19 And *particularly* let me entreat your prayers, *for me* [i], your faithful minister and apostle, *that* being loosed from my bonds, a door of *utterance may be* opened, and free liberty of expression *given to me* [k], *that I may open my mouth with* all confidence and *boldness* in that important cause wherein I am engaged, so as *to make known* in the most effectual manner *the mystery of the gospel*, by going on to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, and steadfastly maintaining what I before have taught, of the Gentiles being called to all the privileges of the gospel-covenant;

19 And for me that utterance may be given me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel:

20 *For which*, through the resentment of the Jewish zealots, I am now a prisoner at Rome, where *I discharge my embassy, in a chain* [l]; *that*, howsoever I may seem to be entirely in the power of my enemies, and have already suffered so much for my zeal for the truth, *I may* have further opportunity to *speak boldly* therein

20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds, that therein I may

h *Watching thereunto with all preseverance.*] Bishop Wilkins explains this (in his Treatise on *Prayer*, p. 39,) of improving *the gift of prayer* by continual exercise, and gathering up fit materials for addresses to God by reading, conversation, meditation, &c.——Compare note d on Phil. iv. 6.

i And *particularly for me.*] Mr. Blackwall observes, that the particle και sometimes signifies *particularly or especially*; and he produces passages to this purpose from proper authorities. *Sacred Classics*, Vol. I. p. 145.

k *That utterance may be given to me.*] This may perhaps refer to some impediment in his speech, or other imperfection in the manner of his address, which might be a discouragement to Paul in his preaching, and seem to have an ill aspect on the success of it. Compare note f on 2 Cor. xii. 7, p. 215, and note k on Gal. iv. 14, p. 278.

l *I discharge my embassy in a chain.*] Some would render πρεσβευω εν αλυσει, *I grow old in a chain*, (compare Philem. ver. 9, where Παυλος πρεσβυτης signifies *Paul the aged*; but it is certain that the common version of this passage may be justified.—Few need to be told, that it was usual among the Romans to chain the prisoner's right-arm to the left-arm of the soldier that guarded him; but as the persons of *ambassadors* were always *sacred*, the *apostle* seems to refer to the outrage that was done to his Divine Master in this violation of his liberty.

m *Tychicus*,

may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

therein, as I ought to speak, in order to approve my fidelity to God, and my sincere affection to the souls of men. (Compare Col. iv. 3, 4.)

21 But that ye also may know my affairs, *and* how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother, and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things:

But I will not insist largely on my own personal concerns; for *that ye also may know the things that relate to me, [and] what I am doing* here at Rome, *Tychicus, a beloved brother, and faithful minister* and fellow-servant *in* the work of *the Lord*[m], *shall* by my direction *fully inform you:*

22 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts.

Whom indeed *I have sent* with this epistle *to you for this very purpose, that ye might* more particularly *know* from him *what relates to us, and that,* by the report which through the Divine goodness he will be able to make, *he may comfort your hearts* as to the grief and trouble you are under for me, and may encourage you to stedfastness in the gospel.

23 Peace *be* to the brethren, and love with faith from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I conclude with my most affectionate and ardent prayers, that *peace* and all prosperity in soul and body may [*be*] *with* all *the brethren* that are with you; *and* that the *love* of God in Christ, attended with a fervent love to one another, may be shed abroad in your hearts, together *with* a plentiful increase and confirmation of *faith* and every other grace *from God the Father, and* from *the Lord Jesus Christ.*

24 Grace *be* with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

And may this *grace*, with all the blessed fruits of it, not only [*be*] *with* you, but may it richly abound to *all* in every place *that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity* and incorruption of heart[n], that are inspired with a true affection to him, and from that love desire faithfully to serve him. *Amen.*

IMPROVE-

m *Tychicus, a beloved brother,* &c.] He was one of Paul's friends and fellow-labourers, and had been his companion in the last interview he had with the *elders of Ephesus*, when he sent for them to come to him at Miletus. See Acts xx. 4, 17, and *note* d on ver. 4, Vol. VIII. p. 208.

n *That love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.*] Mr. Locke explains the word αφθαρσια of such a *love* as would prevent men's *mixing* any thing with the gospel which was not genuine, and might render it ineffectual. (Compare Gal. v. 2, 4.) But it seems rather to express that *uprightness of heart* which is opposed to putting on false pretences; and may with great propriety be understood as a *general* description of a true Christian. And it is manifest indeed, that wheresoever this *unfeigned love to Christ* prevails, there will of course be all the other essential parts of the Christian character.

IMPROVEMENT.

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LET the heart of every *Christian soldier*, be at once awakened and animated, by the important *charge* which the *apostle* here is (as it were) still sounding in our ears. He knew the weakness of the *Christian*, and the dangers of his way; how insufficient for the *spiritual warfare* we are in ourselves, and that our only Ver. *strength is in the Lord, and in the power of his might*, by whom 10 alone we can be kept in safety, and may be made even *more than conquerors in all things*; and therefore pointing us to this, at the same time that he sets forth the difficulty of the combat and *sounds a charge* to the battle, he shews us the provision made for our 11, 13 defence, and calls us to *put on the complete armour of God*; an armour that will serve for *every part*, that will supply us both with offensive and defensive weapons, and help us *to withstand*, and even to surmount, the greatest opposition. Let us see to it then that we *put on*, and that we use it all.

And have we not enough to engage us to it, when we consider 12 that *our enemies* are great and many, that they are restless and unwearied in their *malice*, and that their *subtilty* is inconceivable? *Flesh and blood*, have too frequently worsted us: how then shall we *stand against principalities and powers*, against *the rulers of the darkness of this world* and against *spirits of wickedness* who make it still their business to draw others into that *spiritual wickedness* which they were first so daring as to shew in *heavenly places*? It will be impossible we should at any time be *safe* from danger, if *every direction* here given be not diligently attended to; and having such a numerous and mighty *host of enemies* combined against us, we never shall be *able to withstand* and overcome 14 them, *if the girdle of truth* be loosened, *if the breast-plate of righteousness*, be not put on, *if the preparation of the gospel of peace* do not secure our steps, *if the helmet of salvation* do not guard our head, *if the shield of faith* be not our shelter, and *the sword of* 17 *the spirit* our weapon. And vainly shall we labour to obtain *this* 18 *armour* by any other method, if fervent *prayer and supplication in the Spirit*, under the aids and influences of his grace, be not addressed to the *God of heaven*, whose *work* and whose *gift* this celestial armour is: so that if ever we would have it, and would use it right, let us persist in seeking it with holy importunity and *perseverance*, and the desired answer shall not always be denied.

20 To conclude, Let us often think of the *apostle Paul*, *as discharging his embassy in a chain*, that we may learn to *submit* to whatever

whatever affronts and injuries, whatever hardships and sufferings, we may be called to endure on the account of *religion;* concerned about nothing so much as that we may *approve our fidelity* in the sight of God, and *loving the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity,* may be partakers of the blessings of his *grace, with all* that have a true affection to him. *All* that appear to be *of such a character,* let us ever most affectionately *love,* whatever their particular sentiments or forms of worship may be; and a share of this mercy and *favour,* with all the blessed fruits of *peace* and prosperity, of *love* and *faith,* shall be infallibly our own, and be communicated in a rich abundance to us *from God the Father, and* from *the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.*

SECT. XIII.

23, 24

THE END OF THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR ON THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR,

A PARAPHRASE

ON

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO THE

PHILIPPIANS.

WITH

CRITICAL NOTES, AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.

A

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON

THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

THE Christian religion was first planted at Philippi by the apostle Paul, about the *year of our Lord* 51 : who, having (as the history of the Acts informs us, chap. xvi.) made a progress through Galatia and Phrygia, and intending to pursue his tour through Bithynia, was admonished in a vision to go over to Macedonia. And being arrived at Philippi, which was a city in the *first* part of that province, and a Roman colony (see vol. VIII. § 36, *note* g and h, p. 142), he, with his companions, Timothy, Luke, and Silas, spent some days there in preaching the gospel. During his stay here, he converted Lydia, and cast out a spirit of *divination* from a damsel ; which so enraged her masters, who made a considerable advantage of it, that they stirred up the inhabitants, and threw Paul, and Silas into prison ; from whence however they were miraculously delivered, and the jailor with all his house converted to the Christian faith. Though the apostle soon after left the city, Luke and Timothy continued there some time longer, to carry on the work he had so successfully begun : and this no doubt was one reason that induced him to fix upon the *latter*, as the most proper person to visit the Philippians in his absence, of whose affection for them, and concern for their interests, he takes particular notice (chap. ii. 19—22.)

That the *apostle* himself made these Christians a *second* visit, is plain from Acts xx. 6, though we are not informed of any particulars relating to it ; and it is at least highly probable (for reasons to be given below), that he saw them again after this epistle was sent: indeed the peculiar affection and respect they seem to have discovered for the *apostle*, as well as the sufferings to which they had been exposed, by their faithful adherence to the gospel (chap. i. 28, 29, 30), entitled them to some distinguished regard ; for besides the present he acknowledges to have received from them by the hands of Epaphroditus (chap. iv. 18), they had more than once

once before generously contributed to his support, even during his residence amongst larger and richer societies, (*ib.* v. 15, 16.) And from some hints that are dropt in this epistle we may gather, that they had taken an opportunity of expressing, in the strongest and most affectionate terms, their sympathy with the apostle under his confinement, and their concern lest it should affect the interest of religion, and prevent the spread of the gospel. It is no wonder if such proofs of the sincerest friendship, and the discovery of so excellent a temper, should deeply affect so pious and benevolent a heart as St. Paul's; and accordingly his epistle breathes throughout, the warmest gratitude and most disinterested affection.

As to the *date* of this epistle, it appears from the *apostle's* own words (chap. i. 7, 13; iv. 22), that it was wrote while he was a prisoner at Rome; and, from the expectation he discovers (chap. ii. 24) of being shortly released and restored to them again, compared with Philem. ver. 22, and Heb. xiii. 23, where he expresses a like expectation in yet stronger terms, it is extremely probable that this epistle was wrote towards the close of his *first* imprisonment, and sent about the same time with the epistles to the Colossians, the Ephesians, and Philemon, which (as has been already shewn in the Introduction to the Ephesians, p. 315) was in the *year of our Lord* 63, and the 9th of the Emperor Nero. (See also Vol. VIII. § 60, *note* g, p. 305.)

The *apostle's* design in this epistle (which is quite of the practical kind), seems to be, "to comfort the Philippians, under the concern they had expressed at the news of his imprisonment; to check a party spirit that appears to have broke out among them, and to promote, on the contrary, an entire union and harmony of affection; to guard them against being seduced from the purity of the Christian faith, by *Judaizing teachers;* to support them under the trials with which they struggled; and, above all, to inspire them with a concern to adorn their profession, by the most eminent attainments in the divine life."

The *apostle*, after his usual salutation (in which he joins Timothy's name with his own), begins with assuring the Philippians, in the most expressive language, of his affectionate regard for them, and solicitous concern for their religious interests; acknowledging, with the utmost gratitude, the goodness of God in calling them to partake with him in the blessings of the gospel, and praying for their farther improvement in knowledge and holiness; chap. i. 1—11. And, to remove the apprehensions they were under from the news of his imprisonment at Rome, which seemed to wear so fatal an aspect on the interest of religion, he informs them, that even this event had, under the direction of Providence, been over-ruled for the service of the gospel; while the honest zeal of some, and the envious, contentious spirit of others, both concurred in advancing the same cause: and, notwithstanding all the opposition that was made to him, he declares his cheerful hope and confidence, that in every situation of life, and even in *death* itself, he should still be honoured as the instrument of promoting this

this great object of his wishes; ver 12—20. In this connection it was natural for him to express the strong desire he felt of being with Christ in that better world, where he should receive the blessed fruits of his labours: and, after describing the struggle he found within himself, between his earnest longing after that felicity, and his solicitude for their farther establishment in religion, he declares his readiness to continue here for the service of his Master, and their spiritual advantage; and entreats them, that, while he he did so, he might have the joy to hear, that though he was absent, they maintained the honour of their Christian character, both for piety and courage: ver. 21—30.

The *apostle*, having given the Philippians these general admonitions to maintain a conduct worthy of the gospel, proceeds to exhort them, in the most solemn and pathetic manner, to the particular exercises of unanimity and candor, and a tender care for the interests of each other; which he enforces by the generous and condescending love of our blessed Redeemer; on whose humiliation and exalted state he expatiates with great warmth and energy, urging them to a due improvement of these sublime discoveries by a holy caution and circumspection in their whole deportment, and a life of the most exemplary virtue: which, as it would most evidently conduce to their own happiness, and the honour of their religion, would also make a glorious addition to his joy and triumph at the great day, by affording so convincing a proof of the success of his labours; chap. ii. 1—16. And as a farther instance of the strength of his affection and concern for their happiness, he assures them, that he should even *rejoice* in the view of sacrificing his *life* for their advantage: and since, for the present, his circumstances would not allow him to gratify the earnest desire he felt of administering *personal* consolation and instruction to them, he promises to send Timothy very soon to supply his place; who, on account of the particular affection he had discovered for that church, and the assiduity with which he assisted the *apostle* in his first preaching the gospel there, was of all others the most proper to be employed in such an office. Yet he intimates a strong persuasion, that he should *himself* be soon released from his imprisonment, and have the pleasure of seeing them once again: however, as they stood in need of *present* support, and Timothy could not immediately undertake the journey, he tells them he had commissioned Epaphroditus, by whom he sent this letter, to assure them of his kind remembrance; and, to induce them to pay the greater regard to his messenger, he gives an affecting account of his late sickness, and ardent love to the brethren; ver. 17, *to the end.*

Having thus sufficiently testified the sincerity of his regards for them, the *apostle* goes on to guard them against the influence of some factious, turbulent persons, who had disturbed the peace of the church by their furious zeal for the observance of the Jewish ritual; and exhorts them, in opposition to all such pretences, to fix their whole dependance on Christ and his gospel; which he

assures

assures them he himself had done, though he had more to glory in with respect to Jewish privileges and advantages, than most of these who valued themselves so highly upon them, animating them from his own example, continually to aspire after higher attainments in piety and virtue, as the only means of securing that complete felicity which the gospel promises to all its sincere votaries: chap. iii. 1—14. And, as they had not yet attained to the perfection of the Christian character, he urges upon them, from the glorious hope of the resurrection, a holy and blameless temper, and heavenly conversation; cautioning them against the bad example even of some *professing Christians*, who brought destruction on themselves and reproach on religion, by the unsuitable manner in which they acted, ver. 15, *to the end*; iv. 1.

The *apostle*, having in the former part of the epistle recommended mutual forbearance, peace, and concord, now descends to some *particular* charges relating to the same subject; and then proceeds to give more *general* exhortations to Christian cheerfulness, moderation, prayer, a behaviour universally amiable and praise-worthy, and an imitation of the good example he had endeavoured to set before them; ver. 2—9.

Towards the close of the epistle, he makes his acknowledgments to the Philippians for the seasonable and liberal supply they had sent him; which he declares he rejoiced in principally on *their* account, as it was so convincing a proof of their affection for him, and their concern for the support of the gospel, which he preferred far above any private secular interest of his own; expressly disclaiming all selfish, mercenary views, and assuring them, with a noble simplicity, that he was able upon all occasions to accommodate his temper to his circumstances, and had learnt, under the teachings of Divine grace, in whatever station Providence might see fit to place him, *therewith to be content.* After which, the *apostle*, having encouraged them to expect a rich supply of all their wants from their God and Father, to whom he devoutly ascribes the honour of all, concludes with salutations from himself and his friends at Rome to the whole church, and a solemn benediction; ver. 10, *to the end.*

A PARA-

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO THE

PHILIPPIANS.

SECTION I.

The introduction with the general salutation, suited to the views with which the apostle wrote. Phil I. 1—11.

PHIL. I. 1.
PAUL and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus, which are at Philippi, with

PHILIPPIANS I. 1.

PAUL and Timothy[a], being now providentially together at Rome, both through Divine grace *the* faithful *servants of Jesus Christ*[b], and desirous to promote his interest by their writings, where their other labours cannot reach, do hereby send their most affectionate Christian salutations *to all the saints*, their holy brethren, *in Christ Jesus, which are at Philippi*, whom God hath united to them in the bonds of one common faith. And they greet *with* particular respect

SECT. i.

Phil. I. 1.

a *Paul and Timothy.*] Paul might here choose to join Timothy with him, as he not only had attended the *apostle* in his general travels into these parts, but had assisted in preaching the gospel at Philippi. Compare Acts xvi. 1, 3, 12.

b *The servants of Jesus Christ.*] Some have inquired why Paul does not style himself *an apostle* here, and in his *two epistles* to the Thessalonians, and that to Philemon, as he does in all the other *epistles* that bear his name; and have accounted for it, by observing that no objection had been made to his character at Thessalonica or Philippi; and that having received a *present* from them, he might not seem to be *burdensome* as an *apostle of Christ.* Perhaps it rather was because Timothy or Silas, who were neither of them *apostles* are joined with him *here* and in the *epistles* to the Thessalonians. But I think the question seems to have its foundation in *curiosity* rather than use. See *Pierce in loc.*

c *The*

SECT. i.

respect *the bishops and deacons* of the society[c], to whom the oversight of it in the Lord is so peculiarly committed; wishing abundant success to their labours in their respective and important offices:

with the bishops and deacons:

Phil. I. 1.

2 And wishing to every private Christian under their care, whether personally known or unknown, *grace* even *to you* all, *and* perpetual *peace*, with every attendant blessing *from God*, who is now become *our* covenant-God and reconciled *Father*, *and* from *the Lord Jesus Christ*, though whose blood, righteousness, and intercession, we are brought into so happy a relation to him.

2 Grace *be* unto you and peace from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 When I Paul am addressing a church dear to me by so many bonds, and to whom I am under so many distinguished obligations, it is fit I should assure you, that *I give thanks unto my God*, for such he is, and I recollect it with unspeakable delight, *in every mention of you*; whether before the throne of grace, or when conversing

3 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,

4 with my fellow-Christians. And the former occasion of mentioning you often occurs: for I am *always in every prayer of mine making* humble *supplication for you all*, and mingling those intercessions *with joy* and praise, when I reflect on that honourable profession which you make, and that steady and exemplary conduct by which you support and adorn it.

4 (Always in every prayer of mine for you all, making request with joy,)

5 Yes my brethren, though several years are since passed, I think myself obliged to bless God with all the united powers of my soul, *for your participation in* the blessings of *the gospel*[d], *from the first day* of my preaching it among you, though soon attended with menaces and insults, scourging and imprisonment; and to praise him for

5 For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now.

c *The bishops and deacons.*] As this proves there must have been more than *one bishop* at Philippi, it has been apprehended, by many pious and learned men, to be an intimation that there was then *no difference* between *bishops* and *presbyters*, all the *presbyters*, of this church having as they suppose the title given them here of *bishops*, overseers, or superintendants; for this is what the word επισκοποι beyond all controversy imports. Dr. *Whitby* (in his note on this place) solidly asserts *this interpretation*, and confutes that which would give the words a contrary, and I think a very unnatural, turn. Some think the *deacons* are mentioned as having been particularly concerned in the *liberal supply* that was sent from this church to the apostle, which had been probably collected by them.

d *Participation in the gospel.*] Some by κοινωνια εις το ευαγγελιον understand their *communicating something to the support of the gospel*, and particularly to the supply of the apostle's necessities, referred to chap. iv. 16, and 2 Cor. xi. 9; but to *partake, and to communicate*, are words of different signification, and it is evident that the *original* word generally signifies the former rather than the latter. Compare 1 Cor. i. 9; 2 Cor. viii. 4; xiii. 13; Phil. iii. 10; Philem. ver. 6; 1 John i. 3, 6, 7.

e *As*

for that establishment and increase which he hath been pleased to give to the seed that was sown, and which his grace maintains even *until now.* And he will still maintain it, for [*I am*] *confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in* and upon *you*, and which I have now the pleasure of seeing so far advanced, will not finally forsake the production of his own grace, but *will finish* [*it*] in your souls, *until* he raise it to full perfection, in *the day of Jesus Christ*, when he shall appear in all his glory.

Phil. I. 6.

6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ:

Such are the sentiments of my heart with respect to you, and such the concern I have upon your account; *as it is* indeed *just in me to be thus affected towards you all, because* I know *you have me in your hearts, both in* these *my bonds* for the sake of Christ, *and in* my *defence and confirmation of the gospel*, while I am pleading its cause in the midst of so much opposition and danger: *as you are all partakers with me in the grace* of that gospel [e] which establishes a community of interests between us; and, as you so tenderly and faithfully shew your sense of it, I cannot but return it. Thus I say it ought to be, and thus it is, *for God*, who discerns all the secret recesses of my heart, *is my witness, how earnestly I long for you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.* He knows that I long to see you, with that peculiar tenderness of affection which nothing but these bonds of mutual faith and love, centring in him, can be capable of producing, and which greatly resembles the compassion which Christ himself feels for those whom his grace has made the members of his body. *And*, in the mean time, *this I* continue to *pray* for in your behalf, as the best blessing I can ask of God for you, *that your love* to one another, and to all the saints, *may abound yet more and more:* and that it may be a rational and truly Christian affection, founded *in* a thorough *knowledge* of the principles which tend so much to endear us to each other, *and in all* that inward

7 Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.

8 For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all, in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and *in* all judgment;

e *As ye are all partakers with me.*] Perhaps the *grammar* of this sentence would have been better expressed, if I had rendered it pretty agreeably, to what Dr. Whitby would propose, "*You, who are all partakers of grace with me in my bonds, for the defence and confirmation of the gospel.*" But the sense is nearly the same, and the order in which the words lie in the *original* is much more convenient for the *paraphrasing* than that to which they would be reduced by such a transposition.

f *All*

SECT. i.

ward feeling and *perception* of these sacred ties which nothing but true experimental religion can give [f]. *So as to prove* by experience *things which differ* [g], and know by trial, how incomparably excellent the Christian character is beyond any other; *that ye may be* found not only *sincere and* cordial, but altogether *inoffensive* through the whole of your Christian course,

Phil. I. 10.

11 even *until the* great *day of Christ: Being filled with* all *the* genuine *fruits* and effects of *righteousnes* [h] *which are* produced *by* virtue of a vital faith in *Jesus Christ*, and by strength and influence derived from him, *to the glory and praise of God;* for that great end of the gospel-revelation is never more effectually answered than when the temper and conduct of those who profess it, is agreeable to its sacred dictates.

10 That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere, and without offence till the day of Christ;

11 Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

IMPROVEMENT.

AMIDST the numberless mercies with which, through the
Ver. 1 indulgence of our heavenly Father, we are daily surrounded, what can demand our humble and grateful acknowledgments more
5 than our *participation of the gospel?* To whatever afflictions it may expose us, or whatever we may be called to sacrifice to its interests, every day, in which we share its comforts and supports,
3 calls aloud for our *praises*, both in the enjoyment and in the recollection. And whilst we look *back* with these sentiments of gratitude, let us look *forwards* with cheerful confidence. It is to God's having *begun a good work in us*, that we are to ascribe it, that the *glorious gospel* of his Son is our *joy and our wonder*, rather
6 than our *aversion* and our *scorn*. We may therefore be humbly confident, *that he will not forsake the work of his own hands*, but will finish it, so that it shall appear worthy of himself *in the great day of the Lord*. No

f *All knowledge and perception.*] We render it *knowledge and judgment*, and the former is explained of *speculative*, and the latter of *practical* knowledge: but I think the distinction between the idea suggested by the *original* is much better preserved, by rendering the word αισθησει, *perception*, or inward sensation. He wishes they might not only *know the principles* which recommend candor and benevolence, but *feel their influence* on their hearts; which a daily experience and observation shew us, in some great pretenders to this kind of knowledge, is a very different thing.

g *Things which differ.*] Mr. Howe justly asserts this translation, as well as that preferred in the preceding note, and introduces this text, to shew that we need the *light of the Spirit* to help us to apprehend, to consider, to judge, and determine our actions agreeably to that judgment. *Howe on the Spirit*, Vol. I. p. 271.

h *Fruits of righteousness.*] If this have as some imagine, a more peculiar reference to *liberality*, yet I see no reason for confining it to that interpretation; nor do I think it can properly be said, that every liberal and generous man is *filled with all the fruits of righteousness*, unless there be a prevailing uniformity of character, which is not always to be found.

No wonder that where this blessed work is begun, there is a great *affection* between those who were the instruments of producing it, and those in whom it is produced. No wonder if *Paul* made mention of these his *Christian* converts at *Philippi*, in *every prayer of his, offering up requests for them*, and praying for the increase of their *hope* and *love*. No wonder, on the other side, if their hearts were tenderly set upon him, and that distant as he was, he seemed to lodge there, and their *tender care* followed him through every circumstance of his *bonds* and *apology*; so that *his* sufferings and dangers were even more painful to them than their *own*: while he on his part *longed for them all in the bowels of the Lord*, and could conceive of no greater charm in *liberty* itself than that it might give him an opportunity of cultivating so endearing a friendship by personal converse.

SECT. i.

Ver. 4, 9

7

8

The increase of *love* founded on *knowledge*, and attended with other sentiments of *experimental* religion, is to be numbered among the best of *apostolic* blessings. Every experience of these things will confirm our resolution of maintaining that godly *sincerity*, which will render our conversation *unblameable*, and our account in the *day of the Lord* comfortable. To glorify God *by the fruits of righteousness*, is the great end for which these rational natures were given us; and it is by the exercise of lively *faith in Christ* that these dispositions are cultivated, and these fruits rendered most abundant.

9, 10

11

SECT. II.

The Apostle informs the Philippians how his imprisonment at Rome had been providentially over-ruled for the service of the gospel; and strongly declares his cheerful hope and confidence, that this great object of his wishes should still be promoted, whatever events might be allotted to him. Phil. I. 12—20.

PHIL. I. 12.

BUT I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things *which happened* unto me, have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel:

PHILIPPIANS I. 12.

SECT. ii.

MY dear friends, I am fully convinced of the tenderness of your affection for me; and, as I have declared above, I do you the justice to believe, that you have me in your heart, while I continue under this confinement for the testimony of Jesus. *But I would have you to know*, my much beloved *brethren, that the things relating to me*, some of which have given you so much concern, on the most friendly and generous principles, have been so over-ruled by the Divine wisdom and goodness, that indeed they *have*

Phil. I. 12.

SECT. ii.

have fallen out rather to the advancement than hindrance *of the gospel*, which ye were ready to fear. *So that my bonds in Christ are manifested*[a], and taken notice of *in all the palace* of Cæsar, *and all other* [*places*] in and about the city, and have seemed so remarkable, that many have been excited to inquire, much to their own satisfaction and advantage, what there was in this new and unknown religion, that could animate me so cheerfully to endure so much hardship and persecution in its defence; for they soon traced up my sufferings to this as their only cause. *And* this had so happy an effect, that *many of the brethren in the Lord*, instead of being discouraged, *were emboldened by my bonds*, when they saw my firmness and constancy under them, so as *to venture with much more undaunted courage to preach the word* of the gospel, which our enemies thought, by their persecution of me, to have discountenanced and silenced.

Phil. I. 13.

13 So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other *places*;

14 And many of the brethren in the Lord waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

Indeed I cannot say, that all who have engaged in this work have acted upon the noblest principles; for *some preach Christ even from envy and contention*, desirous to maintain in the church a party that shall oppose me, and willing to add as many abettors to it as they possibly can; *while others* do it *out of* [*sincere*] *affection*, faithfully intending the honour of God, the interest of the Redeemer, and the advancement of human happiness, which is so inseparably connected with the success of Christianity in the world.

15 Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will.

The first indeed preach Christ out of strife, and *not with* purity and *simplicity* of intention, but on the contrary, from the unkindest and unworthiest motive, as *desirous to add* yet more *affliction to my bonds*, by strengthening the cause of those, who, while they call themselves Christians, seem to place a point of honour and conscience in hurting my reputation, and abetting unreasonable prejudices, which have been so eagerly raised and propagated, to the disadvantage of my character. *Whereas others* [*preach*] him out *of* cordial *love*, and, amidst the many other

16 The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds:

17 But the other of love, knowing that I am

a *So that my bonds in Christ are manifest.*] Mr. Pierce would render it, *so that it is manifest, both in the prætorium and elsewhere, that my bonds are for Christ*, i. e. that I suffer *only* for the sake of Christianity, and not for any real crime; and he argues from the order of the words, φανερους εν χριστω γενεσθαι; but I think this interpretation would require γενεσθαι to be read twice, which would be a much greater difficulty in the construction than the latter translation he would avoid. Nevertheless, in the close of the *paraphrase*, I have included this thought.

am set for the defence of the gospel.

other noble and benevolent views on which they act, have some regard to that comfort which they are sure it will administer to me, *as they know that I am* raised up, and *set*[b] in the place in which I appear *for the defence of the gospel;* and that nothing can make my sorrows and distresses sit so light upon me as to see that this blessed cause is in some measure promoted by them. *What then* is the result of these attempts, proceeding from such different principles? It is, that I am, in one view or another, pleased with them both: for though I could indeed wish that all, engaged in so honourable a work, were pursuing it from the most worthy and generous motives, *yet every way, whether* it be only *in pretence* of pious zeal, *or in* the *truth* of it, *Christ is* however *preached,* and the great doctrine of salvation by him has something of a wider spread. *And in this I* heartily *rejoice, yea, and I will* continue to *rejoice:* for I had much rather that some, who are converted to Christianity by my enemies, should think as ill of me as they themselves do, than that they should remain ignorant of those fundamental truths, on the knowledge of which their eternal happiness depends. Nor do I much regard the opposition which may arise against me from the ill-designing teachers, or their misguided followers: *for I* well *know, that,* disagreeable as its present effects are, even *this shall issue in* promoting *my salvation*[c], *by your* continued *prayer* to God for me, *and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,* which shall be liberally dealt out in answer to it: *According to my earnest expectation, and* cheerful *hope, that I shall in nothing be ashamed,* whatever injurious reflections may be made upon my conduct; *but* [*that*], *by all* the *freedom of speech* which I am still determined to use, *as* it hath *always* been hitherto [*so*] *now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by* its liberty or confinement, whether in *life or* in *death.* When I consider all possible contingencies that can arise in this view, I find my

SECT. ii.

Phil. I. 17.

18 What then? notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

18

19 For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer. and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

19

20 According to my earnest expectation, and *my* hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but *that* with all boldness, as always, *so* now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether *it be* by life or by death.

20

b *I am set.*] Some would render κειμαι, *I lie,* i. e. in bonds for the gospel, in order to make an apology for it.

c *My salvation.*] Mr. Pierce explains σωτηρια as signifying *deliverance from prison,* and thinks, that as they that preached Christ out of love made more friends for the *apostle,* so they that preached him out of envy gave his friends an opportunity of representing his *persecutors* as proceeding upon principles of malice. But, to wave other *remarks,* I cannot think that *such* an event could be said to proceed from the *supply of the Spirit of Christ.*

SECT. ii.

my heart most cheerfully reconciled to them all, and, instead of trembling at the thought of martyrdom itself, I rather rejoice in it.

Phil. I. 20.

IMPROVEMENT.

How admirable is the conduct of *Divine Providence!* and in how beautiful a manner does it often work the *purposes* it wisely and graciously determines, by events which seem to have the most *contrary* tendency! Who could have imagined that the *im-*
Ver. *prisonment* of *St. Paul* should have been effectual to the advance-
12 ment of *Christianity?* Thus can God animate and encourage his servants, by the extremity which their *brethren* suffer in his cause;
14 so that they shall *wax confident by their bonds* and their martyrdom. Let this then reconcile us to all the allotments of Providence, and establish us in *an earnest expectation and hope that*
20 *Christ will be glorified in all things by us, whether by our life or death:* and who, that knows the grace of God in truth, would not rejoice even in *death* itself, if the gracious *Redeemer*, who gave his own life for us, may thereby be *magnified?*

15 How execrable the temper of those who *preached Christ out of envy and contention*, and managed a ministry which should have breathed nothing but love, in a view of adding *affliction to* those *bonds* that oppressed this best of men! But how generous and amiable the disposition which the *apostle* expresses when he rejoices in this, *that Christ was preached*, though the purposes with re-
18 gard to him were so unkind! *These* are the wonders which the love of *Jesus* produces in the soul; thus doth it empty us of every malignant passion, and reconcile us to the most *disagreeable* events, that may advance *his* interests. Where such principles inspire the breast, the faithful servants of *Jesus* will find their *own account*, while they are wholly intent on *his* honour. All these events shall *turn to their salvation;* but let it be remembered, that it is
19 through *the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ* which sanctifies to us every circumstance through which we pass. That these *supplies* may be imparted, let us unite our prayers in favour of *all who love our* common *Lord in sincerity.* (Eph. vi. 24.)

SECT.

SECT. III.

Paul freely lays open to the Philippians the sentiments of his heart as to life and death, declaring his desire to be with Christ in a better world, but his readiness to continue here for his Lord's service; and entreats them, that, while he did so, he might have the joy to hear that, though he were absent, they maintained the honour of their Christian character, both for piety and courage. Phil. I. 21—30.

PHIL. I. 21.
FOR me to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain.

PHILIPPIANS I. 21.

SECT. iii.

Phil. I. 21.

I HAVE expressed my expectation and my hope that Christ will be glorified in me, whether by life or by death, and it is a hope which I am encouraged to form by a consciousness of the temper I feel in my heart. *For to me to live* [*is*] *Christ*[a]; he is the supreme end of my life, and I value it only, as it is capable of being referred to the purposes of his honour. *And*, in consequence of this, *to die* [*is*] *gain*; for as this temper argues my interest in the friendship of that Redeemer, who is the Lord of the invisible as well as the visible world, I am well satisfied that he will make ample provision for my happiness when I quit this transitory life, and surround me with far more important blessings than any which I must then resign. *And if* he determines that *I live* longer *in the* infirmities and sorrows of mortal *flesh*, I desire to acquiesce; for *this* [*is*] what I esteem *the* great *fruit of my* life and *labour*, and an ample equivalent for all its fatigues, that I may be capable in some measure of promoting the great end which engaged him for a while to make his abode here in this humble form of human nature. *And* thus, on the whole, *which I should choose*, if it were entirely referred to myself, *I know not: For I am*, as it were, *borne two different ways*[b]; *having*, on the one hand, *a* more

22 But if I live in the flesh, this *is* the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose, I wot not.

22

23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having

23

a *To me to live is Christ*, &c.] Mr. *Pierce* would translate this clause, *Christ is gain to me living or dying*. But the paraphrase shews how it stands connected on admitting our version. Nor can I think the other version natural, as it quite destroys the *antithesis* in those members of the sentence which are opposed to each other.

b *Borne two different ways*: συνεχομαι εκ των δυο.] The *original* is very emphatical; and it seems (according to the turn I have given it in the *paraphrase*) to be an allusion

SECT. iii.

more earnest *desire*, out of regard to my own immediate happiness, *to be unbound*; to weigh anchor, as it were, *and*, quitting these mortal shores, set sail for that happy world, where I shall *be* immediately *with Christ*[c], *which is better beyond all* comparison and *expression*, than a longer abode here would be, were I to regard only my own immediate comfort and happiness:

Phil. I. 23.

having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:

24 *But to abide in the flesh* [*is*] I know *more expedient* and necessary *for you* and my fellow-Christians, who need my farther assistance. *And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide*[d], *and* I am heartily willing, though my own personal glory be delayed, to *continue with you all, in order to the advancement of your faith, and* of that *joy* which is supported by it[e]: *That your* boasting and *rejoicing in me may in* and through *Christ Jesus be more abundant*, and your Christian consolation greatly increased, *by my coming among you again* to make you another visit, when I am enlarged from my present confinement; as, when it has answered the schemes of Providence with respect to it, I hope I shall be.

24 Nevertheless, to abide in the flesh *is* more needful for you.

25 And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all, for your furtherance and joy of faith;

26 That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me, by my coming to you again.

27 *Only, let* me always urge this upon you, that *your conversation*[f] may *be* such *as becomes the gospel*

27 Only let your conversation be as it becometh

allusion to a ship stationed at a particular place, and riding at anchor, and at the same time likely to be forced to sea by the violence of the winds; which presents us with a lively representation of the *apostle's* attachment to his situation in the Christian church, and the vehemence of his desire *to be unbound*, as I have rendered αναλυσαι, that is, to weigh anchor and set sail for the heavenly country.

c *Be* immediately *with Christ.*] This plainly proves that the separate spirits of good men are *with Christ* in such a manner, as that their state is *far better* than while they continue in this present world; which a state of insensibility cannot possibly be. But Mr. Fleming very justly observes, that it will not at all disprove that large *accession* of happiness after the resurrection, which other scriptures plainly declare. *Flem. Christ.* Vol. III. p. 530. Compare 2 Cor. v. 5—10. The original phrase, πολλω μαλλον κρεισσον, which we render *far better*, is so very emphatical, that I cannot translate it literally, and I know not how better to imitate the sense, than by rendering it *better beyond all expression*; for indeed the *apostle* seems to *labour* for expression here as much as in any part of his writings.

d *I know I shall abide.*] Probably, as Mr. Howe conjectures (Vol. II. p 89), he had some *particular revelation* to ground this confidence upon. I can by no means think he refers to any intimation from the *palace* how it was likely to go with him. He must have known little of princes and courtiers (especially in Nero's reign), to build so confidently on such a foundation.

e *The advancement of your faith and joy.*] *Your furtherance and joy of faith* is a more literal *translation*; but as it expresses nothing more than that here given, which is rather plainer and easier to be understood, I hope I need make no apology for such a liberty here and in several other places.

f *Let your conversation.*] The learned Professor Franckius thinks a *parenthesis* begins with these words, which is continued to the end of the 16th verse of the next chapter; but it appears to me neither necessary nor natural to allow it. The word πολιτευεσθε signifies, most literally, to behave as *denizens* of some city or corporation; but to render it, as Dr. *Scott* proposes (*Christian Life*, Vol. I. p. 42), *citizen it* as becomes, &c. is making a great deal too free with the English language.

g *Not*

becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel;

gospel of Christ, and may do an honour to your profession of his religion; *that* so *whether I come to visit you, or be* long *absent* from you, *I may* see and *hear concerning you, that ye stand fast in one Spirit, striving together* as *with one soul*, and in the most vigorous united efforts, *for the faith of the gospel;* which it will be your interest to contend for, how violently soever your mightiest adversaries may attempt to wrest it out of your hands. SECT. iii. Phil. I. 27.

28 And in nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.

And indeed I hope it will appear, 28 that you are *not in any degree terrified*[g] *by* all the rage and fury of *your enemies, which*, when duly considered, *is to them an evident token of* surely and quickly approaching *destruction*[h], as nothing can be a more certain sign that they are ripe for it, than the prevalency of such a persecuting spirit among them; *but to you* it is a sure evidence *of* complete *salvation*, quickly to be revealed, *and that from God* himself, who will reward your pious fortitude with blessings proportionably distinguished.

29 For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;

And in this view 29 I would have you to look upon these trials, and, instead of dreading them, to be thankful for them. *For it is granted to you as a favour on the part of Christ*, our great Lord, *not only to believe in him, but also* that you should have the distinguished honour *to suffer for his sake*[i]; in consequence of which you will be entitled to the peculiar rewards of those who have been martyrs and confessors in the cause of his truth. (Compare Acts v. 41.)

30 Having the same conflict which ye saw in

Having in a great 30 measure *the same struggle* with the adversaries of the gospel, who labour to overbear it by brutal

g *Not in any degree terrified*, &c.] It evidently appears from hence, and from several other passages in this *epistle*, that the Philippians were now in a suffering state, which is a circumstance to be borne in mind as we go on, as it illustrates several masterly strokes in the *apostle's* address to them.

h *Evident token of destruction.*] Mr. Pierce, by interpreting it, "they think it a proof of your being obstinately bent on your own ruin," loses the true sense and spirit of the passage.

i *Suffer for his sake.*] From this *text* and some *parallel* passages, such as 1 Thess. xi. 14; 2 Tim. iii. 2; Heb. x. 32; 1 Pet. i. 6; some may object to what Dr. *Lardner* has asserted, when he says, that most of the first *persecutions* which the Christians suffered came from the Jews. It is no wonder if that obstinate and cruel people were peculiarly enraged against the disciples of Jesus, who so expressly contradicted many of their favourite maxims and tenets. And though, to be sure, their greatest influence was in Judea, yet it is well known that in other places they had a power of imprisoning and scourging in the *synagogues*, and it is highly probable that many of the severities inflicted by Gentile magistrates on the first preachers of the gospel were at the instigation of the Jews who dwelt in the cities over which these magistrates presided. Compare Acts xii. 3; xiii. 50; xiv. 19; xvii. 5, 13; xviii. 12; xix. 9. See Dr. *Lardner's Cred.* Vol. I. p. 417, &c.

k *Saw*

SECT. iii.

Phil. I. 30.

tal violence, *as ye saw* to be *in me*[k] when I was among you at Philippi, and was stripped and scourged, and laid in the dungeon and in the stocks, *and* which you *now hear* [*to be*] *in me* at Rome; whither you know I was sent in bonds as an evil doer, having been obliged to appeal to Cesar for the preservation of my life, when attempted by enemies who would be contented with nothing less than my blood, which they had solemnly bound themselves to shed.

in me, and now hear *to be* in me.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 21 How happy must that man be, who can truly say that *to him to live is Christ, and to die gain!* What a blessed alternative is before him, and how cheerfully may he leave it to Providence to decide which of the two shall be appointed for him! And yet how vain must life be, and how miserable death, to that man who cannot say it! *He that gathereth not with Christ, scattereth abroad* (Mat. xii. 30); and when death comes to such an one, it is the loss of all, attended with the final, and alas! the eternal 23 loss of himself. While the good man pronounces it *better, beyond all comparison, to depart,* that he may *be with Christ,* and submits only to continue in life, as the part in which self-denying duty 24, 25 requires him to acquiesce. But, O! how unworthy the Christian character, to be averse to so advantageous a remove! To be un- 22 willing, and that even on such terms, *to depart and to be with Christ!* As if any converse, any friendship, any enjoyment, any hope here, were comparable; yea, as if it were preferable to serving him in his immediate presence, under the everlasting tokens of his acceptance and delight.

But if that Master, whom we have the honour to serve, determine to us an abode here for months and years to come, and his 25 church may receive advantage by it, ill shall we requite *his* love, who quitted heaven for this sinful and wretched earth of ours, if we are unwilling for a while to *wait* till he shall call us up to himself. Very deficient shall we be in that gratitude and zeal which we owe him if we find not something of a heaven begun even below, in doing what may be pleasing to him, in managing his interest, with such degrees of ability as he shall be pleased to honour us with, and so training up others to a meetness for those

k *Saw* to be *in me.*] I see not why this should be explained as referring only, or chiefly, to his conflicts with judaizing teachers, concerning which at Philippi we read nothing. This seems one of the many *texts* which may be expounded in a greater latitude than that in which some late learned commentators and critics have taken it. It would be tedious to mark all instances of a like kind.

those enjoyments which he hath taught us by his grace to expect and pursue. SECT. iii.

Whatever our stations may be, whether in public or private life, let it be our care, in every circumstance and relation, that *our conversation may be as becometh the gospel;* that we may adorn so holy a profession, and answer so glorious a hope. If opposition arise, let it not *terrify* us. It will, if well supported, be a token of *salvation, and that of God.* Let us account it an honour, and the gift of the Divine favour to us, to be called and strengthened *to suffer for his sake.* So were the *prophets*, so were the *apostles*, dignified. We have heard of their noble contentions, that we might emulate them; and well may we do it, since we have the same *Author*, *Finisher*, and Support of *our faith*, and hope to partake of the same *exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* (2 Cor. iv. 17.) Ver. 27 28 29 30

SECT. IV.

The Apostle exhorts the Philippians to unanimity and candor, and a tender care for the interest of each other; which he enforces by the generous and condescending love of our blessed Redeemer: of whose humiliation and exalted estate he discourses in a very affectionate manner; pressing them to a due improvement of it, as what would most highly conduce to their own happiness and his comfort. Phil. II. 1—16.

PHIL. II. 1.

IF *there be* therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies;

PHILIPPIANS II. 1.

I HAVE been expressing my concern, that your conversation might be worthy of the gospel; and, as nothing can conduce more to it than the exercise of mutual love, permit me, my dear brethren, to enforce it farther upon you, by every pathetic consideration which our common faith and most holy religion can suggest: and particularly by the affectionate remembrance of my sufferings and your own. Compare i. 30. *If therefore* [*there be*] *any consolation in Christ* himself, the great Source of all our enjoyments and hopes, for whose sake we have endured so many extremities; *if* there be *any comfort* and delight in the exercise *of* the most tender and endeared *love*, *if* there be *any* communion of hearts, founded upon the *communication of* one and *the* same *Spirit*, working in all our souls; *if* there be on the whole *any bowels* in human nature, *and* any *compassions*, either manifested by SECT. iv. Phil. II. 1.

SECT. iv.

by God to us, or wrought into the constitution of our being by the great Author of it: In a word, if there be any affectionate bond, by which you are united to me, who have been by Divine grace made your spiritual father, and by whose ministry you have been made acquainted with these engaging views; *complete ye my joy*, and endeavour to fill my heart with the most exalted pleasure, while I lie in these bonds, for my fidelity to God and to you. Now in this view I am desirous, beyond expression, *that ye may* all *be unanimous*[a], *maintaining the same love*, however your sentiments, and, in some instances, your practice may be divided; still *having your souls joined together*, and all their ardor combined *in attending to the one* great *thing*, which ought to be the leading concern of every Christian, the advancement of vital, practical holiness: by attending diligently to which, you will be diverted from those undue attachments to smaller matters, which so often divide the affection of Christians, and take them off from the pursuit of the noblest objects.

Phil. II. 2.

2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind.

3 And in view especially guard against pride, and [*let*] *nothing* [*be done*] or said, *out of* a spirit of contradiction and *contention*, *or from vain-glory*, to draw the eyes of others upon you, and make yourselves the subjects of discourse and admiration; *but in* unaffected simplicity and *lowliness of mind*, *esteeming others as more excellent than yourselves*; which, on one account or another, you may know almost every

3 *Let* nothing *be done* through strife, or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves.

4 one to be. *Do not every one aim at his own* separate *interests*, profits and conveniences, *but* aim *each of you also at* promoting *the interests of others*: be always ready to deny yourselves for the general good, and to condescend to one another, as the happiness of every particular brother and friend may require.

4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

In

a *Unanimous*, &c.] It is difficult to *translate or paraphrase* these words so as to avoid some appearance of *tautology*. In my *third letter* to the author of *Christianity not founded on Argument*, p. 43. I had given a translation in the main the same with this; but on further examination, whereas I had there united the second and third clause, as an explication of the first, *let your souls be joined together in the same love*, I here, as in my *Sermon on Christian Candor*, p. 8.) join the two former and two latter clauses. το αυτο φρονητε, την αυτην αγαπην εχοντες, *be unanimous, maintaining the same love*; συμψυχοι, το εν φρονουντες, *having your souls joined together, in attending to the one thing*. An improvement, for which I am obliged to my learned, accurate, and worthy friend Dr. Daniel Scott.

b *Who*

SECT. IV.

Phil. II. 5.

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:
6 Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

In this respect, and in every other, *let the same mind be in* every one of *you, which was also* in so eminent and amiable a degree *in Christ Jesus*, whom we call our Master and our Lord; Even in that illustrious and adorable Person, *who, being* long before his appearance in human flesh, *in the form of God*[b], and having been from eternal ages possessed of Divine perfections and glories, when manifesting himself to the patriarchs and prophets of old, *thought it not robbery* and usurpation *to be* and appear *as God*[c], assuming the highest Divine names, titles, and attributes, by which the supreme Being has made himself known; and receiving from his servants divine honours and adoration: *Nevertheless*, in his infinite condescension and compassion to us miserable sinners, *emptied himself* of all his glory, *taking* [*upon him*] instead of the splendors which he had been used to wear as the Sovereign of angels, *the* humble *form* not only of a common man, but even *of a servant, when made in the likeness of men*, which itself had been a most astonishing stoop, even though he had appeared in

6

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

7

b *Who being in the form of God.*] Few of my readers can be ignorant of the pains learned men have taken to establish two very different *translations* and senses of this important text, and of the contrary uses which have been made of it in the controversy relating to the Deity of our ever-blessed Redeemer. The critics, who would render ουκ αρπαγμον ηγησατο, &c. *did not eagerly catch at a likeness to, or equality with God,* build a great deal of their argument on the opposition of the two clauses and the force of the particle αλλα. *He did not affect this equality, but humbled himself.* I have often wondered at the stress laid on this, since every one must know that αλλα often signifies *nevertheless*, and accordingly it is frequently rendered so in our version, particularly Mark xiv. 36; John xi. 15; 1 Cor. ix. 12; Gal. iv. 30; 2 Tim. i. 12. And, which is especially to the present purpose, it is sometimes thus rendered, when preceded by the particle ουκ; see Rom. v. 13, 14; 2 Cor. xii. 16. I have given such an interpretation of the passage as appeared to me, on mature deliberation most agreeable to the text itself, in comparison with other scriptures; and the learned reader cannot be at a loss to find the opinion of the most celebrated writers on each side of the question relating to it. I hardly recollect any that have discussed it with more accuracy than *Bos* in his *Exercit.* 2d Ed. p. 196—203; and *Sir Richard Ellys*, in his *Fortuita Sacra*, p. 178—228. Bishop Burnet well observes, that the Socinian interpretation is extremely cold and insipid, as if it were a mighty argument of humility that, though Christ wrought miracles, which they strangely think signified by the phrase of *being in the form of God*, yet he did not set up for supreme deity. See *Burnet on the Art*, p. 46.

c *To be* and appear *as God.*] So ισα Θεω is most exactly rendered, agreeable to the force of ισα in many places in the *Septuagint*, which Dr. Whitby has collected in his note on this place. The proper Greek phrase for *equal to God* is ισον τω Θεω, which is used, John v. 18. Mr. Peirce thus paraphrases the clause before us, "He was not eager in retaining that likeness to God," of which he was before possessed; and he observes, that, had it referred to what was considered as future, the expression would have been εσεσθαι not ειναι, and farther pleads, that the *apostle's* design here is not to caution the Philippians against coveting what they had no claim to, but to engage them, after the example of Christ, to give up their *own right* for the advantage of others.

d *God*

SECT. iv.

Phil. II. 8.

in the pomp of the greatest monarch. *And* yet even this condescension to the rank of low life among sinful mortals, wonderful as it was, did not content him: for, *being found in fashion* and appearance *as a man*, and having put on all the innocent infirmities of our nature, *he humbled himself* still farther, *becoming obedient even unto death;* and indeed to no common and gentle form of dissolution, but to *the* ignominious, as well as painful *death of the cross*, on which he expired, as you well know, like one of the vilest and most accursed of mankind.

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

9 *Therefore God* his Father, to whom such a course of filial obedience, proceeding from such noble principles of piety and charity, could not but be most acceptable, *hath exalted him to the most eminent dignity* [d], *and granted him a name* the honours of which are *superior to* those of *every* other *name* that can come in comparison with it; *So that in the name of Jesus*, in humble subjection to his authority and command, *every knee shall bow*, and every spirit submit, *of celestial* [*beings,*] in their various orders of dignity *and* glory, as well as of *those upon and under the earth* [e]: angels and men, the living and the dead, yea, devils themselves shall do him homage: and he be ever adored, as the Saviour of his redeemed people, as the Head of all holy and happy spirits, and the Sovereign and uncontroulable Lord of all those whose rebellion against him and his heavenly Father hath made them the worthy objects of perpetual displeasure and punishment. *And* thus hath God taken effectual measures, that *every tongue may confess that Jesus Christ*, his anointed Son, [*is*] indeed *Lord* of all, *to the glory of God the Father*, in whose name he administers his mediatorial kingdom, and to whose honour he professedly refers it.

9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name;

10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things*, in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth;

11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Therefore,

d *God hath exalted him to the most eminent dignity.*] This seems a more natural translation of the word υπερυψωσε, than what Mr. Peirce proposes, who would render it, *exalted him higher than before.* I think nothing can be more evident than that he who was exalted was humbled, and consequently, that there was a proper change made in the state and condition of Christ, by that emptying himself spoken of ver. 7.

e *Those upon, and under the earth.*] There can be no doubt but the former clause relates to Christ's being made Sovereign over the *angelic* spirits, Eph. i. 10. But whether this latter phrase, *Things upon, and under the earth*, may not relate to the *living* and the *dead*, rather than *men* and *devils*, some have queried; Compare Rev. i. 18; Rom. xiv 9; and it is certain that the word καταχθονιοι sometimes in the *Greek Classics* signifies the *dead*. But on the whole, as the expression is ambiguous, I have, as I usually do in such cases, included both in the *paraphrase*.

f *Much*

12 Wherefore my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence; work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

SECT. iv.

Phil. II. 12.

Therefore, my beloved Christian brethren, as God hath, in the person of his Son, so gloriously rewarded that bright assemblage of virtue for which he was so incomparably illustrious, and particularly, that condescension, humility, and benevolence, which I have so earnestly been recommending to you; let it be considered by you, as an engagement to tread in his steps, with diligence and resolution, so far as the feeble powers of human nature may admit. And, *as* justice requires me to acknowledge that *ye have always been obedient* to my instructions and exhortations, while I have had the pleasure of being with you, be solicitous, that *not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence*[f] (which though it deprives you of some advantages, yet, as it is owing to my bonds in your cause, ought to increase the tenderness of your concern for my comfort), you may *work out your own salvation*[g], with great earnestness and assiduity; yea, considering its infinite importance, *with* holy *fear and trembling*. I say your own salvation, for that will be most effectually secured and promoted by the temper I have now been recommending. Seize that happy opportunity of doing it which Divine grace affords; *for God is he who worketh in you*[h], *both to will and to perform of*

13 For it is God which worketh in you, both 13

f *Much more in my absence.*] Though there be an ambiguity in the connection of this clause, if the *grammar* only be considered, I think the sense obliges us to join it with the *following*, rather than with the *preceding* words. The *paraphrase*, suggests the reasons why his *absence* should make them more eagerly solicitous in *working out their salvation:* but I know no reason to apprehend that they were less obedient to Paul when he was with them, than to any messages they might have received in his absence, and the word *now* in this view seems decisive.

g *Work out your own salvation.*] Mr. Peirce has advanced a very peculiar *interpretation* of this text: for he would render it, "*promote the welfare of each other.*" urging that κατεργαζομαι sometimes signifies the same with αλληλων; compare Eph. iv. 32. But not to insist on the expression, *with fear and trembling*, as greatly favouring the common interpretation, it is obvious, that κατεργαζομαι is three times in this *chapter* put for *our own* things, ver. 3, 4, 21. And whereas it is pleaded on the other side, that the sense given above is most agreeable to the connection, it seems to me that this turn in the expression farther suggests, that, by following those generous maxims the *apostle* had been recommending, they would also most effectually secure their own salvation; which instead of detracting any thing from the force of the argument, as the words are usually understood, greatly increases it.

h *He who worketh in you.*] The original is very emphatical, as Mr. *Howe* beautifully observes (*Howe's Works*, Vol. II. p. 21), for it asserts, on the one hand, that God is actually or continually operating, and on the other, that thus to work in the heart for such noble purposes, is the *prerogative of God*, and an effect worthy his Divine attributes and perfections. I can by no means think with Dr. *Clarke*, that this merely signifies, that God hath given us a *power* to choose and to act (*Post. Serm.* Vol. VI. p. 69), but that it refers to the operation of *Divine grace*, as is strongly intimated by the concluding clause, *of his own good pleasure*; which Mr. Howe finely explains, not so much of his *goodness* in general, as of his *sovereign freedom*

SECT. iv.

of [*his own*] *good pleasure.* You ought therefore to consider every good affection and purpose which arises in your heart, as suggested by his grace, which waits upon you, to enable you to bring it into perfection. And remember, that he operates with such sovereign freedom, that if these condescending favours be slighted, they may in righteous displeasure be withdrawn; and I leave you, my dear brethren, to reflect how fatal the consequence would then be.

both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.

Phil. II. 14.

15 Go on therefore resolutely in your whole Christian course, and *let all things be done without* those *murmurings and disputings* which so ill become the relation in which you stand to each other, and that community of interest in which, as the servants of this compassionate Saviour, you are united.

14 Do all things without murmurings and disputings:

On the whole, let me, by every most affecting consideration, urge it upon you again and again, *that ye may be blameless and inoffensive,* and act up to the dignity of your relation as *the children of God,* maintaining an *unexceptionable* character, *in the midst of* all the malignity which you must expect to encounter from *a perverse and crooked generation,* with which ye are surrounded: *amongst whom,* be concerned that ye may *shine as* elevated *lights*[i] *in the* dark *world* about you; that you may direct those that sail on this dangerous sea, and secure them from suffering shipwreck on those fatal rocks which every where lie in their way. Thus must you, as you tender the lives and the souls of your fellow-creatures, be continually *holding out* to them, for their guidance and instruction, *the word of life,* by which you have been directed to steer safely for the blessed haven of glory and immortality, and whereby they may receive the same benefit. A variety of important considerations concur to inspire you with so happy a resolution, and I doubt not but you will allow some

15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world:

16

16 Holding forth the word of life, that I may rejoice in the day of Christ;

freedom in these operations; he works υπερ της ευδοκιας, *freely.* Compare Mat. xi. 26, which suggests the caution expressed in the *paraphrase.*

i *Shine as* elevated *lights,* &c.] I am indebted to the learned and eloquent Mons. *Saurin* for this version and paraphrase. He has justly and beautifully observed, that the word φωστηρ has this energy, and alludes to the buildings which we call *light-houses;* the most illustrious of which was raised in the island of Pharos, when Ptolemy Philadelphus built that celebrated *tower,* on which a bright flame was always kept burning in the night, that mariners might perfectly see their way, and be in no danger of suffering shipwreck upon the rocks which they were to pass in their entrance into the haven at Alexandria. *Saur. Serm.* Vol. IX. p. 460.

Christ; that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

some weight to this among the rest, that it will greatly tend *to* promote *my rejoicing in the day of Christ, that* it may appear *I have not run* through the course of my apostolic office *in vain, nor laboured* in the duties of it *in vain;* but that the great end of it has been at least in part answered, in the glory of God, by your salvation and usefulness. SECT. iv. Phil. II. 16.

IMPROVEMENT.

We know *the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.* Few Christians are unacquainted with the remarkable *phrases* in which it is here expressed. But how few seriously pause upon it, and labour to affect their hearts with its important meaning! Who can conceive the dignity and glory of Christ, when *in the form of God, and accounting it no robbery* or *usurpation to be as God?* Who can conceive of that mysterious act; of that (if we may be allowed to say it), more than mysterious *love*, by which he *emptied himself* of this glory, that he might assume the humble *form of a servant, being found in fashion like a man,* and then might stoop yet lower, so as to become *obedient to death, even the death of the cross?* Often let us contemplate this amazing object: often let us represent to our admiring, to our dissolving hearts, the man *Christ Jesus* extended there, and pouring forth his soul in agony and blood. As often let us remember his high original, his Divine glories, the bosom of the Father, the throne of God. With pleasure let us reflect, that he is returned to it, and that, having ennobled this low nature of ours by so intimate an union with the Divine, *God his Father*, hath in that nature *exalted him, and given him a name above every name*, human or angelic, in the visible, or in all the distant and different regions of the invisible world. Let *our knees* gladly *bow* to so amiable a Sovereign, and let us with pleasure view the approaching day, when every knee shall submissively own his authority, and *every tongue confess him Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* Ver. 6 7 8 9 10 11

In the mean time, let us never forget the purposes for which the *apostle* hath here called our meditations to these wonderful and instructive truths. It is to inculcate upon us (O may we ever inculcate it upon ourselves!) that *the same mind may* always *be in us that was* also *in him.* That, if there be *any consolation* in such a Saviour, *any comfort in* such *love*, as he teaches, *any bowels* of tenderness in human nature, *any* endearing *fellowship in the* one *Spirit* which we derive from him, we may with united hearts 5 1, 2

SECT. IV.

and hands be carrying on the one great business of his servants, *working out our salvation with fear and trembling;* avoiding every thing that may grieve and injure others, every thing that may discredit our holy profession. And being now made by him *the children of God*, may we *shine* with a bright, steady flame, as *lights in the world*, and *hold out*, for the benefit of all around us, *the word of life*, as the gospel which redeems us from the second death, and raises us to eternal life, may properly be called. May we spread its lustre through as wide a circle as possible, and with it *that* happiness, which nothing but a cordial belief of it and subjection to it can bring to the human heart.

Ver. 12 15 16

To conclude, let us learn, from these wise and pious exhortations of the *apostle*, at once our *duty* and our *dependence;* our duty *to work out our own salvation;* our dependence on the grace of him, *who worketh in us, both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure.* And therefore let us so seek Divine grace, and rest upon it, as to exert with vigour and resolution the faculties which are to co-operate with it; and let us so endeavour to exert the faculties which God hath given us, as to confide in Divine grace, and rest continually upon it; without which we shall neither will nor do any thing pleasing to God, or available to our own salvation: for in this sense, *salvation is of the Lord*, and through *his blessing*, which *is upon his people.* (Psal. iii. 8.)

13 12

SECT. V.

The Apostle assures the Philippians of his readiness even to die for their advantage, but expresses his hope of being set at liberty, and restored to them in person: in the mean time, he promises them very soon a visit from Timothy, and sends Epaphroditus for their immediate satisfaction; of whose late sickness, and ardent love for them, he speaks in very affectionate terms. Phil. II. 17, *to the end.*

SECT. V.

PHIL. II. 17.

YEA, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your

Phil. II. 17.

PHILIPPIANS II. 17.

I HAVE been expressing my hope, that your temper and behaviour will be such as would prove my labours among you not to have been in vain, and afford me matter of rejoicing in the day of the Lord. But it is impossible for me fully to express the earnestness with which I desire that it may be so. *For if I should even be*, if I may use such language, *poured forth*, and my blood be shed *as a* kind of libation, or *drink-*

faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all.

drink-offering[a], *on the sacrifice and ministration of your faith*, while you are presented by my means as an acceptable offering to God, far from lamenting that I should meet with death in such a cause, *I* rather *rejoice, and congratulate you all* on that happy circumstance into which you are brought by that gospel which I have at so great an expence delivered to you. *And* *on this account, do you also rejoice and congratulate with me*[b], for while suffering the last extremities in a cause like this, I am happy, and ought to be regarded as an object of congratulation rather than of condolence.

SECT. V.

Phil. II. 17.

18 For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me.

18

19 But I trust in the Lord Jesus, to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort when I know your state.

It will indeed be no surprise to me, if my work and testimony as an apostle should end in martyrdom, *but*, as I intimated above (chap. i. 25), I do not immediately expect it; and, in the mean time, would omit nothing which may shew my endeared affection to my Christian brethren, and particularly to you. In pursuance of which, *I hope in the Lord Jesus*, to whose direction and controul I desire to submit all my schemes, and in whose hand the life and the ways of his servants are, that I shall *quickly* be able *to send Timothy to you; that* by him, not only you, but *I also may be refreshed, knowing* from him [*the state of*] *your affairs* more particularly than I can otherwise hope to do.

19

20 For I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state.

My respect for you inclines me to make choice of him on this occasion, though I can ill spare him; *for I have none* here with me in all respects *of a like disposition, who will* so *naturally*, with such a genuine tenderness and concern, *take the care of your affairs.*

20

21 For all seek their own,

Indeed a temper like this is too uncommon; *for*, great as our engagements and obligations to

21

a *If I should be poured forth*, &c.] This is the proper import of the word σπενδομαι. Almost every reader must know, that as oil and wine made a part of the provisions of the table God had ordained in the Jewish ritual, that a proportionable quantity of each should attend every bullock, goat, ram, lamb, or kid, which was presented at his altar. The heathens also used such libations, and sometimes they used blood, mingled with wine, in honour of their *idol* deities. Compare Psal. xvi. 4. The apostle considers the faith of the Philippians as an acceptable sacrifice presented to God, and if he incurred *martyrdom* for his zeal to promote it, he might speak of his blood as a *libation* poured out upon occasion of it, with greater beauty and propriety than most *commentators* have observed.

b *Congratulate with me.*] I cannot read this heroic discourse of the *apostle* without reflecting on the behaviour of the brave Athenian, mentioned by *Plutarch* (*Glor. Athen. ap. Op.* p. 347), who returned to Athens, from the victorious battle of Marathon, bleeding to death with the wounds he had received in the action, and coming directly to the house where the magistrates were assembled, uttered only these two words, χαιρετε χαιρομεν, *take your share of our joy*, and immediately dropped down dead at their feet.

SECT. V.

to a contrary disposition are, I may say it, with very few exceptions, that almost *all seek their own things*[c], *none the things of Christ Jesus.* It is hard to find, even among those that call themselves his disciples, any who have their Master's interest so affectionately at heart as not to neglect it, in some degree at least, out of regard to their own secular interest and pleasure,

Phil. II. 21.

own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.

22 ease and safety. *But you know the experience of him*, who was with me as well as Silas, in that memorable visit which I first made you (Acts xvi. 1, 12); and you had an opportunity of seeing, *that as a son with a father, he served with me in* the work of *the gospel*, and neglected no occasion of doing, in the most affectionate manner, whatever might lighten either my la-

22 But ye know the proof of him, that as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel.

23 bours or my sufferings. *I hope therefore to send him* very *quickly* to you, *as soon as I see how my affairs will be determined.* And though he be so useful to me, I shall be willing to spare

23 Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me,

24 him upon your account. Till they come to a more certain crisis, I conclude it will be most agreeable to you that he should defer his journey. *But I trust in* the providence and care of *the Lord* Jesus Christ, to whose guardianship I commit the life I have devoted to his service, *that I shall soon* be set at liberty, and *come to*

24 But I trust in the Lord, that I also myself shall come shortly.

25 *you myself. Yet* in the mean time, or at least till Timothy can be more conveniently spared, *I thought it necessary* and expedient *to send to you Epaphroditus, my* dear *brother, and* diligent *fellow-labourer* in the work, *and fellow-soldier* in the arduous combat and painful sufferings of Christ: *but* who was *your* most welcome *messenger* to me[d], *and the* ready *minister to* the relief of *my necessities*[e], by whose faithful hand I received

25 Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and companion in labour, and fellow-soldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.

c *All seek their own things.*] Perhaps the *apostle* may speak this in reference to the part which some Christians, and possibly some ministers, at Rome had acted, to whom he might have proposed this journey; which they might decline through too great a regard to their own ease and conveniency, which laid him under the necessity of parting with Timothy.

d *Your messenger.*] As the word is αποστολον, some would render it, *your apostle*, and they have stooped so low as to draw an argument from hence, to prove that he was their *bishop* in the modern sense of the word, and that such *bishops* are the immediate successors of the *apostles* in their extraordinary rank and power. But the ablest patrons of *diocesan episcopacy* have had the modesty and prudence to spare this argument, as it is so incongruous to suppose that he should be employed as a *messenger* to carry the churches alms to Paul, when he must have had such important business at home; nor does what follows by any means agree with such a supposition. See Mr. *Peirce's Vind.* p. 338, &c.

e *He that ministered to my necessities.*] λειτουργον της χρειας μου.] Mr. Peirce follows Castellio in rendering it, "*he who is now to act for me with you*," supposing the *apostle's* intention was to appoint Epaphroditus as his representative in the church,

SECT. V.

Phil. II. 26.

ceived that liberal supply which your pious friendship so cheerfully advanced. Had I only consulted my own convenience and pleasure, I should have been glad to have detained him longer; but I now give him his dispatches, *because he was exceedingly desirous of* returning to *you all*, for whom he has a most endeared affection, *and was* much *dejected* and troubled *because* he knew *you had heard that he was sick*, and he feared lest the tidings should grieve you too much, as he could not but know how affectionately you love him. *And indeed* it is very true, that *he was sick*, *and* in all human appearance *near to death*[f]: *but God had mercy upon him*, and recovered him; *and* I must say, in this instance, he had *not* compassion *upon him alone, but also on me, that I might not have sorrow upon sorrow;* as I certainly should have had, if the loss of such a beloved friend, and of so useful a person, had been added to all the other afflictions I sustain in this imprisonment, and amidst so much perverse and ungrateful opposition. *I have therefore sent him* away to you, *with the greater diligence, that seeing him again* in that comfortable state of health and spirit, to which by the Divine goodness he is now restored, *ye might rejoice; and that I might be the less sorrowful*, while I in spirit partake with you in the satisfaction which I know this interview will give on both sides. *Receive him therefore* as *in the Lord* Jesus Christ, as mindful of your mutual relation to him, *with all joy*, in the bowels of Christian love, as well as the demonstrations of natural friendship: *and hold* persons of *such* a character, whatever their station of life may be, *in high estimation. For* it was, in a great measure, *on account of* that zeal and fervour which he exercised in carrying on *the work of* the Lord Jesus *Christ*, both in preaching the gospel, and attending my necessities, that *he was nigh unto death, having disregarded* even [*his own*] *life, that he might fill up the deficiency of your service to me*[g], and might, if

26 For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick.

27 For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.

28 I sent him therefore the more carefully, that when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful.

29 Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness and hold such in reputation:

30 Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life to supply your lack of service toward me.

church, who was to supply his place during his absence, and whom therefore he styles αποστολον. But the word χρεια is in other parts of this epistle, as well as elsewhere, used in such a manner as to favour the interpretation given in our version. Compare chap. iv. 16, 19.

f *Nigh unto death.*] The journey and change of air might contribute to his disorder, as well as the assiduity of his attendance on Paul, and dispatching his affairs in all weathers, and perhaps at all hours.

g *Deficiency of your service:* Το υμων υστερημα της προς με λειτουργιας.] Mr. Peirce would

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if it were possible, perform to me in his own person all the kind offices which your whole society could have rendered me had you been with me as he was.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 17, 18 To what sublime heights of piety and virtue does the immortal hope of the gospel elevate the mind of mortal man! Behold this holy apostle, not only presenting himself as a resolute *victim* at the altar of God, but speaking of that stroke by which his *blood was to be poured out* as an occasion of *joy*, and calling for the *congratulation* of his friends upon it! Behold him with pleasure resigning the society of those who were dearest and most useful to him, at a time when he seemed most of all to need their assistance; even of that friend, who would most *naturally care for their estate*, when he knew *none that were like-minded!* And O 20 that this might be the character of all the ministers of *Christ naturally*, and with genuine affection, *to care for the state* of those committed to them, taking thought for them and the *oversight of them, not by constraint*, but from a principle of love, which shall make all necessary labours natural and easy! But alas, how rare a character is it, and how much reason is there to lament the prevalency of a contrary disposition among all ranks of men, the sacred order itself not excepted; while *all seek their own things, none the things of Jesus Christ!*

21 What ingratitude does this argue! Yea what stupid insensibility, that any thing, that every thing, should be dearer to us than the interest of that Saviour who *purchased us to himself with his blood!* Happy they, who are distinguished by their fidelity and their zeal, in a time of prevailing apostacy! which we are not to wonder if we discover in these latter ages, when the *apostles* found cause to speak thus in their own. How beautiful a description does he here give of the piety and humility of young *Timothy* 22 while *serving with him as a son with a father in the gospel!* Thus let young and aged ministers behave to each other, as *fathers* and *sons:* the young paying the elder such reverend regards, the aged affording to the younger such kind and tender patronage, and shewing a solicitous concern to prepare them for filling up their place in the church with increasing advantage.

Some obvious instruction arises from what is here said of good *Epaphroditus*

would render this, *supply the remainder of your beneficence to me*, which in sense is much the same. The apostle considers them as disposed to have rendered him what service they could *in person*; but not having an opportunity to do it themselves, the good Epaphroditus was in this respect their proxy and *representative*.

Epaphroditus, whose affection to his Christian friends was so ardent, and whose *zeal for the work of Christ* had even endangered his life. Great reason is *there to hold such*, wherever they are found *in high esteem*, tenderly to sympathize with them, earnestly to entreat God for them, if at any time diseases threaten their useful lives ; and to own the *mercy of God, not to them only, but to us*, when he is pleased to raise them up, and restore them to a capacity of ministering in his church. Let us go back, in our memories, to the days and weeks of dangerous sickness which any of us have known, and humble ourselves before God, that we have no better improved for his glory, and for the good of his church, *his mercy to us*, in bringing us up from *the gates of the grave*. SECT. V. Ver. 29 27

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Paul exhorts the Philippians to fix their whole dependance on Christ and his gospel, as he assures them he himself did, though he had more to glory in with respect to Jewish privileges and advantages than most who valued themselves so highly upon them. Phil. III. 1—14.

PHIL. III. 1.

FINALLY, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed *is* not grievous, but for you *it is* safe.

PHILIPPIANS III. 1.

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AS for what remains, my dear *brethren*, that I may proceed to what I farther design in this epistle, let me exhort you, whatever may become of me, or of yourselves, so far as any worldly interest and prospect is concerned, that ye *rejoice in the* protection and care of the *Lord* Jesus Christ[a], our blessed Redeemer, and in the promises and hopes given us by him. I have already insisted upon them with pleasure, chap. i. 5, 6, 10, 11, 20, &c. chap. ii. 5, 11, and *to write the same things, to you*[b], on such a topic, [*is*] *not grievous to me, and* [*it is*] not only *safe*, but necessary *for you;* as nothing can tend more to fortify you against the many temptations Phil. III. 1.

a *Rejoice in the Lord.*] Some have apprehended a *contrast* with chap. ii. 25, 28, where he tells them, "he had sent Epaphroditus, that he might rejoice at his coming," as if he had said, And now I add, that while you are rejoicing in him, I would have you *Rejoice in the Lord*, discerning the interposition of Christ, in his being preserved and restored to you. In this connection it might have been made the conclusion of the *second chapter*, but it may go naturally, as in the *paraphrase*, introduce what follows, that I did not choose to alter the usual division.

b *To write the same things.*] Diodate thinks this is an intimation that he had written a *former epistle* to them, which is now lost. Compare 1 Cor. v. 9 ; Col. iv. 16. Mr. Fleming thinks it refers to what he had said to them formerly, and that he only gives some hints at these larger conversations in the following verses, which he thinks makes them something obscure. *Flem. on the First Resur.* p. 4.

c *Beware*

SECT. VI. tions and enemies with which you are surrounded.

Phil. III. 2. And, in farther prosecution of my great design for your spiritual security and edification, let me urge you to *beware of* those invidious, malignant contentious persons, whom I cannot forbear calling *dogs*[c], so much have they of a brutal and canine disposition, snarling and malicious, greedy and fierce. *Beware of evil workers*, who, while they cry up the law, act in direct contradiction to its most important precepts and grand design. *Beware of the concision*, for such I must call that body of men which proudly usurps the name of the circumcision, whereas the external rite they so much contend for is but an unprofitable cutting and mangling the flesh, when performed from such principles, and imposed with such a temper: so that the bloody work of it may seem an emblem of the cruel manner in which they cut and
3 mangle the church. Be on your guard against them, I say it again and again, *for*, how unwilling soever they may be to allow it, *we* Christians *are* indeed *the circumcision, who worship God*, not with the ritual observance of the Mosaic law, but *in spirit and* in truth; who *boast* not in Jewish privileges, but *in Christ Jesus*, through whom we obtain Divine favour and acceptance, *and have no confidence in the flesh*, though we do in fact wear the mark of circumcision in it, or however else we may be distinguished by birth, education, or any external
4 forms. *And indeed* I say this, not as if I were deficient in any thing, wherein another can boast, for it is evident *I have also what might be* [*an occasion of confidence in the flesh*, for *if any other thinks he hath whereof to trust in the flesh, I* fear not to say I [*have* probably *more*
5 than he. I was not only *circumcised*, but that according to the exactest institution of Moses, *on the eighth day*[d] after I was born; *of the stock*

2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.

3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh;

4 Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:

5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, *of* the tribe

c *Beware of dogs.*] This may very possibly be an allusion to Is. lvi. 10—12. Compare ver. 19; Tit. i. 11, 12; Rom. xvi. 18; Gal. vi. 12, 13. The Jews used to call the Gentiles *dogs*, and perhaps St. Paul may use this language when speaking of their proud bigots, by way of retaliation. Compare Rev. xxii. 15. L'Enfant tells us of a custom at Rome, to chain their dogs at the door of their houses, and to put an inscription over them, *Beware of this dog*, to which he seems to think these words may refer.

d *Circumcised the eighth day.*] It evidently appears, that the Jews did not only lay a great deal of stress on the rite of *circumcision*, but on the time of performing it, i. e. exactly on the *eighth* day. The *Septuagint* have an addition to Gen. xvii. 14, which is also found in the *Samaritan Pentateuch*,

tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;

stock of Israel; God's chosen people, not as some circumcised families are descended from Ishmael, or Edom; and *of the tribe of Benjamin,* whose lot lay so near the temple of God, and which joined not with the ten tribes in their general revolt, but still adhered to Judah, and to the true worship of God at Jerusalem. Not only by my father's, but my mother's side, have I been from generation to generation *an Hebrew,* descended from a long line *of Hebrews* [e], so that I reckon no proselyte of foreign nations in my genealogy: *with respect to the law* I was *a Pharisee,* of a sect which most strictly and vigorously adheres to it, and has adopted that guard which tradition has set around it to secure it from the least degree of violation. *With respect to zeal* for these rituals, which they so eagerly enjoin, I myself was once employed with the greatest fury in *persecuting the church* of Christ, and endeavouring, if possible, to root it up from the face of the earth: *as to that righteousness, which is* placed *in* an exact observation of *the law* in its external precepts, I have been quite *blameless* and unexceptionable, so that those who knew me most intimately, could not have accused me of any wilful transgression, or of neglecting any expiatory rites and sacrifices appointed in case of involuntary errors. This was my character and state; and there was a time when I was proud of being able to say all this, and thought myself exceedingly happy. *But* now my views of things are altered, and a very different scene hath opened itself upon me, so that *the things which were* once *gain to me,* and which I most valued myself upon, *I have* now *accounted* but as *loss for Christ* [f]. I look upon them as things most despicable when compared with him, yea as things which would be extremely mischievous to me if they should in any degree prevent my application to him, or my sharing the benefits of those

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Phil. III. 5.

6 Concerning zeal; persecuting the church touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

6

7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

7

Pentateuch, "the male-child, which is not circumcised on the eighth day, shall be cut off from among his people."

e *Hebrew of Hebrews.*] If, as some have conjectured, the turbulent person to whom Paul especially refers, were only the son of a proselyte, and not of a native Jew, there was a peculiar propriety in dwelling on these circumstances. But on every interpretation it will appear proper, and I am always cautious of clogging the *paraphrase* with the supposition of any thing of which there is not some considerable proof.

f *I counted loss for Christ.*] i. e. *I threw them away,* as mariners do their goods on which they before set a value, lest they should endanger their lives; in which sense ῥιπτω is used, Acts xxvii. 21.

g *Have*

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those that believe in him. *Yea doubtless, and I count all things*, how valuable soever, to be *but loss* and damage *with respect to the most excellent knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord*, which so much exceeds every other knowledge or interest that can come in competition with it; *for* the sake of *which I have suffered the loss of all things*[g], having been expelled with infamy from among the Jews, and deprived of all the towering hopes to which my ambition might once have aspired: *And*, far from repining at it *I account them* not worth mentioning, for they seem to be *but* vile refuse and *dung*, *that I may gain* that inestimable prize and treasure, *Christ* Jesus, in whom alone I shall be safe, and rich, and happy for ever. Though not only reputation *and* power, ease and plenty, but even life itself should be sacrificed to this view, I am happy enough, if I may but *be found in him*, vitally united to him by a true faith and love, and so taken under his protection and favour; *not having mine own righteousness which* [*is of*] *the law*; such a righteousness as only consists in observing the precepts or expiations of the Jewish religion, which I was once so solicitous to establish; nor any confidence in any legal righteousness whatever, as my plea before God, *but that* I may be interested in that *which* [*is*] *by the faith of Christ, the righteousness which* [*is*] *of God through faith*; that which he has appointed we should obtain and secure, by believing in his Son, and making our application to him as creatures condemned and undone, whose only refuge is in his righteousness and grace. Compare Rom. i. 16; iii. 22; x. 3. This is my great concern, experimentally *to know him, and* feel *the* efficacious *power of his resurrection* continually, working upon my mind, *and* bearing me forward with the most cheerful resolution, to share in *the fellowship of his sufferings* too, *being made conformable to his death*, in all the tortures of crucifixion itself, should his Providence call me to it. *If* having done and suffered any thing which God lays in my way, *I may* but *by any*

Phil. III. 8.

8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowlege of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ,

9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection

g *Have suffered the loss of all things.*] It is not by any means improbable, that a sentence of *excommunication* might be pronounced against Paul, or, at least, that his goods might be *confiscated*, as we know other believing Hebrews, though probably no one of them so obnoxious to their Jewish brethren as himself, were actually treated. Heb. x. 33, 34.

h *Attain*

resurrection of the dead:

any possible *means* at length *attain to the resurrection*[h] *from the dead*[i], and that consummate holiness and blessedness which he will then bestow upon all his people, when the dead in Christ shall rise first, and be distinguished with glories proportionable to the vigour with which they have exerted themselves in his service.

Phil. III. 11.

12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

This I say, *not as if I had already attained* to all that I wish to be, *or were already perfect*; for I am truly sensible how far I am from that perfection of character, as well as of state, which the gospel teaches me to aspire after; *but I pursue it, if* by any means *I may but* reach and *apprehend that* height of excellence *for which also I am apprehended by Christ Jesus*, whose condescending hand graciously laid hold on me in my mad career, in so extraordinary a manner as you have often heard, and has introduced me into that blessed race in which I am now engaged[k]. 12

13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one

Brethren, I repeat it again, with all unfeigned humility of heart, that *I count not myself to have attained* already, I have much nobler heights 13

h *Attain to the resurrection.*] Mr. Peirce would render the words εἰ πως καταντησω, *that any way I may arrive at the resurrection, &c.* supposing it alludes to the ship's arriving at the port it is bound for. But the word *attained* has an ambiguity, which equally answering the original, seems better to suit the 12th verse, in which the *apostle* certainly means something more than that he had not *yet arrived at the resurrection of the dead.* The particle *if*, in this connection, implies no *uncertainty* of the resurrection, nor any *doubt* as to Paul's attaining it.

i *The resurrection from the dead.*] Mr. Fleming understands St. Paul as speaking here of a *first resurrection* of martyrs and the most eminent saints, which many good men might fall short of, and of which he thinks the *apostle* himself might not have an absolute assurance. And he lays great stress upon the peculiarity of the phrase, την εξαναστασιν την εκ των νεκρων for so he would read it, according to the *Alexandrian MSS.* and would render it, "*that peculiar resurrection which is to be from among the rest of the dead.*" *Elem. on the First Resur.* p. 22, 82. But I thought that *reading* and *version* too precarious to be adopted here, especially as it appears to me that εξανιστημι is sometimes used without any such *emphasis.* Compare Mark xii. 19; Luke xx. 28; and that the more emphatical phrase, της αναστασεως της εκ νεκρων, Luke xx. 35, simply signifies that resurrection of which *all* good men are to partake, and indeed the general declaration, that the *dead in Christ are to rise first*, will fully answer any thing implied in these expressions. The *editors* of the Prussian Testament think the Jewish teachers who opposed Paul with so much eagerness were of the sect of the Sadducees, and that he takes the more frequent notice of the *resurrection*, in opposition to their pernicious tenets in relation to it.

k Hath introduced, *&c.*] Candidates in the *Grecian games*, especially when they first presented themselves, were often *introduced* by some person of established reputation, who, at the same time that he spoke as honourably as might be of his friend, urged him to acquit himself with the utmost vigour and resolution; and it is possible that this clause may allude to that circumstance. But I conclude that, even on this *interpretation*, it farther expresses the sense the *apostle* had of his obligations to the condescension and grace of Christ, in *pursuing* and *seizing* him while he fled from him, and so engaging him to aspire to this crown of life. Compare 1 Tim. i. 15, 16.

1 *But*

SECT. VI.

heights of holiness in view, and am sensible how far I fall short of them. *But one thing*[l] [*I can say,*] that herein I imitate the conduct of the racers in your celebrated Grecian games; my thoughts and cares are all fixed upon this great object, and, *forgetting the things which are behind,* not looking back with immoderate self-complacency on the steps already taken, and the way already dispatched, *I* am concerned intensely, with all the vigour and agility I can possibly exert, to *stretch forward toward those things* 14 *which are before;* And so *I pursue the goal for the* glorious *prize* which strikes my sight there; even that which is the ultimate end *of the high calling*[m] *of God,* with which he hath honoured me, by the dispensation of his grace *in Christ Jesus*[n]; and surely no calling can be more noble, or better deserve the most constant attention and most ardent pursuit.

Phil. III. 13.

one thing *I do,* forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

14 I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 As it was *not grievous* to the *apostle* to repeat the same useful exhortations, when he judged it conducive to the *safety* and happiness of those to whom he wrote, so neither should it be grievous to us *to hear* or *to speak* truths, with which in the general we

l *But* this *one thing* I do.] Mr. Peirce thinks the most exact grammatical construction of these words is this, "I press after that *one thing* for which I have been apprehended by *Jesus Christ,* that I may apprehend or attain it, neglecting the things behind, and stretching forward to those before, *after this one thing,* I say, I press, according to the aim I have fixed to myself, that I may obtain the *prize* of the high calling, &c. But I think the construction may be clear enough, by supplying the words, "*I can say,*" without the transposition he would attempt here.

m *I pursue the prize of the high calling.*] Here is all along a beautiful *allusion* to the *Olympick games,* and especially the *foot-races,* which made the most celebrated part of them; where the prize was placed in a very conspicuous situation so that the competitors might be animated by having it still in their sight. Mr. *Dunlope* considers the word βραβειον as expressing the *principal* prize, whereas some might come to the *goal,* and receive *lower* rewards: as if he had said, I labour to come in so as to secure the greatest, *i. e.* I aim at being an advanced and exemplary Christian. *Dunl. Serm.* Vol. II. p. 331. But I cannot recollect any secondary prize bestowed on the Olympic foot-race (though in *funeral* games it was common), nor can I suppose the apostle to refer to the *pentathletick crown,* i. e. the crown given to one who conquered in all the athletic exercises, though that might certainly by way of eminence be called το βραβειον, *the grand prize.* See Mr. *West's Dissert. on the Olympic Games,* p. lxiii.

n *Of God in Christ Jesus.*] L'Enfant thinks the apostle compares our Lord to those who stood on an elevated place at the end of the course, calling the racers by their names, and encouraging them, by *holding out the crown,* to exert themselves with vigour. But, not to insist on the uncertainty of this, it would seem at all events more rational to interpret *the high calling,* as alluding to the *proclamation* made, by which men were called before the opening of the course to contend for such and such a prize, which answers to the *general declaration* made in the gospel of the heavenly prize.

we may be well acquainted, but which we may be too ready to forget, in pursuit of things, more *amusing* indeed, but less *advantageous.* Such are the truths here inculcated; familiarly known, but not therefore to be disregarded. Let us avoid all approaches to these *detestable characters* here branded with so just an infamy; and consider what it is that will constitute us the *circumcision*, the people whom God will avow for his own; and charge it upon our souls, that we *worship God in the Spirit*, that we *rejoice in Christ Jesus*, and *repose not* in any sense *confidence in the flesh.* SECT. VI. Ver. 2, 3

We see an example of this excellent temper in the *apostle* here, who makes his *boast in Christ*, and for him *renounces* those advantages on which he was once ready to set the highest value. He accounted those things but *loss and damage* which once he esteemed his *gain* and his treasure, especially that eager but blind *zeal* with which he had once *persecuted the church.* May it be deeply and constantly impressed upon our minds, that the *knowledge of Christ* is of all things the *most excellent*, as the *object* of it is most sublime and interesting, and the *fruits* of it most happy and important. This therefore let us pursue, and be truly solicitous that we may *gain Christ* as our own unalienable property, and that we may be *found in him*, interested in a better *righteousness* than we can claim, by virtue of our own personal obedience to any law; even that which is *by the faith of Christ*, the *righteousness which is of God*, prepared, exhibited, and appointed by him, and which is received *by faith* in his Son. 4, 5, 7, 8, 9

Who would not wish to know him in the *power of his resurrection*, to feel the views of that great event powerfully operating on his mind, yea in this connection to know the *fellowship of his sufferings* too? Who would not be willing to be made, in the most painful sense, *conformable to his death*, to feel the scourges, the insults, the nails, the cross, and what was more dreadful than all, even the desertion of the Father himself, might he thereby *attain* to a resemblance to *Christ* in a glorious *resurrection from the dead?* It shall be the portion of all who *die to sin, and live to God*, and persist in a resolution of sacrificing all to that Redeemer *who for us died and rose again.* 10, 11

In the mean time, while we are surrounded with the infirmities of mortality, may we ever keep up an humble sense of the *imperfection of our present attainments* in religion. May we with holy *Paul*, so incomparably our superior, *forget* the progress already made, and strain every nerve, in *reaching on* to what yet remains before us. How far are we from *apprehending that for which we were apprehended by Jesus Christ!* How far from answering the plan our Lord has drawn, and being completely what 12, 13

he

SECT. VI.

he intended his servants should be! "Enkindle in our breasts, O thou great *Author and Finisher of our Faith!* a more ardent desire of answering it; and for that purpose, may it please thee so to display before our believing eyes the glorious *prize of the high calling* with which *God* has honoured us through thee, that we may feel all the ardor of our souls awakened to obtain it, and never slacken our pace till we win that immortal crown, but daily increase our speed as we approach it."

SECT. VII.

The Apostle urges upon the Philippians a holy and blameless temper and a heavenly conversation, cautioning them against the bad example even of some professing Christians who brought great detriment on themselves, and reproach upon religion, by the unsuitable manner in which they acted. Phil. III. 15, *to the end.* IV. 1.

SECT. VII.

Phil. III. 15.

PHILLIPPIANS III. 15.

SUCH is the situation of my own mind, and the ardour of desire with which I am pressing after farther attainments in the Divine life. *Let as many of us therefore as are perfect* in any degree, that is, all who are sincere Christians, and initiated, if I may so express it, into the holy mysteries of our religion, *attend to this*[a], as our great business and aim; *and if any of you are otherwise affected*, if any be unhappily fallen into a remiss and indolent frame, *God shall reveal even this unto you*[b]. I hope that he will, and I pray that he may, give you such views of the

PHIL. III. 15.

LET us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

a *As many of us as are perfect*, &c.] The use of this phrase, in reference to those *initiated into the mysteries*, is so well known, and the allusion here seems so suitable to the connection, that I presume I need not largely vindicate the *interpretation* given. I shall only add, that when this expression is used to intimate, that the *greatest adepts* in Christianity should be labouring after higher improvements, it must strongly imply the obligation on those in a *lower class* to press forwards.

b *God shall reveal*, &c.] Mr. Fleming, in pursuance of his peculiar interpretation of ver. 11, *paraphrases* this verse as if he had said, "If any of you are not persuaded of that doctrine of a first resurrection, which is not indeed of the utmost necessity, God may hereafter reveal it more fully; and in the mean time, let us aim at that common glory which we all profess to expect at the general resurrection." But I think if Paul had declared it as a part of the revelation he had received from Christ (and he could surely know it no otherwise than by special revelation), it could not have been left to them as a *matter of indifference*, to judge one way or another of it. Dr. Whitby labours to prove that the *apostle* here glances on those Christians who might be ready to lay too great a stress on *circumcision* and *Jewish ceremonies* with relation to which he hoped they would be better informed, which at least they would probably be after the destruction of Jerusalem. Compare Gal. v. 10; vi. 15, 16.

the crown of glory, the prize of our high calling, as may animate your most vigorous pursuit of it. *Nevertheless* [c] *(whereunto [I hope] we have* at least *attained), let us* act as those who are habitually persuaded of the Divine authority of the gospel, and accordingly all *walk agreeably to* what we profess to revere, as *the same* great authentic *rule* of our conduct; and *let us* especially be taught by it to *attend to the same thing*, to be one in our affections to each other, concerning which our duty is so plainly declared, that the weakest honest inquirer cannot be mistaken. SECT. vii. Phil. III. 16.

16 Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule; let us mind the same thing.

Thus I exhort you, and I hope I may appeal to all that know me, that my behaviour speaks the same language. So that I may confidently say, *Be ye*, my *brethren, imitators of me, and observe*, and endeavour to follow *those that walk, as ye have us for an example;* join this company, and learn to speak and act like them. *For* there are *many* who call themselves Christians, and yet *walk [in a very different manner], of whom I have often told you, and now tell you even weeping;* for well indeed may I weep on so sad an occasion, as it is certain [*that*], whatever they may profess, [*they are*] *enemies of the cross of Christ* [d]; and as they are unwilling to suffer any thing for it, so its cause and honour suffers much by them, for they continually act contrary to the very end and design of their Master's death. Such a set of men there is, *whose* behaviour is scandalous, and their *end* [*is*] utter *destruction.* Whatever they may talk of knowing and serving the true God, they 17 18 19

17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so, as you have us for an ensample.

18 (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ:

19 Whose end *is* destruction, whose god *is their*

c *Nevertheless, &c.*] The construction here has some perplexity, but, on the whole, I think δει is to be understood as if he had said, "I could wish to animate you to the greatest ardour in pursuing the prize;" however at least remember to agree in honouring the *gospel* as your *common rule*, and bearing a proper *affection* to each other. And if we suppose the words εις ο εφθασαμεν, to come in as a *parenthesis*, and to be rendered, *to which I hope we have attained*, a proper distinction will be preserved between this and the *preceding* verse, which have often been confounded. For the sense of the *phrase* φρονειν τελο, see Phil. ii. 2, and Rom. xii. 16.

d *Enemies to the cross of Christ.*] The end and design of *that* being to attract our hearts from earth to heaven, such an expression may be proper in that sense though some think it refers to their *aversion* to persecution, understanding by the *cross of Christ*, the cross to be borne *for Christ*, I think much less properly. Nor does it seem to refer so much to their contending for Jewish ceremonies, as in general to their *immoral temper* afterwards described. It is to be feared many converts from the Gentiles, as well as from the Jews, answered this character, and if they did so, it was entirely to the *apostle's* purpose to reprove them.

e *Transform*

SECT. vii.

they are persons *whose* chief *god* [*is their*] own *belly* (compare Rom. xvi. 18), which they continually seek to honour with the most luxurious sacrifices; persons whose taste is so mean *and* preposterous, that *they glory in* those things which are indeed *their shame*, having outgrown all the remainders of common modesty, and all sense of decency. In a word, they are persons *who mind* only *earthly things*, all their thoughts and pursuits are taken up with visible and corporeal objects, the concerns of time and this transitory world. *But we converse as citizens of heaven*, considering ourselves as denizens of the New Jerusalem, and only strangers and pilgrims upon earth. We therefore endeavour to promote the interests of that glorious society, to learn its manners, and to behave worthy of our relation to it: *from whence also we expect the* blessed appearance of our *Lord Jesus Christ* as *a Saviour; Who shall transform our vile body* [e], *that it may be made conformable to his glorious body;* that all the abasement and dishonour of the grave ma[y] be shaken off for ever, and we, having borne his image in holiness on earth, may bear it in beauty, glory and immortality in heaven. It is indeed a vastly surprising, and to sense an incredible change; but we ought to remember, that nothing is too hard for omnipotence: he will therefore effect it, *according to the energy whereby he is able to subject even all things unto himself*, and which will render him completely victorious over all his enemies, even over death and the grave, the last of them.

Phil. III. 19.

20

21

Therefore let me entreat and charge you all, *my beloved and most amiable brethren, my joy* now *and* my *crown* of rejoicing in that expected day of the Lord, that, as ye have so great and important a hope, ye improve it to animate you in a vigorous adherence to that religion which inspires it; and *so stand fast in the Lord* [f], as becomes those who are so dear to him, as well as so tenderly *beloved* by me, and who expect by his grace so glorious a change.

IV. 1

their belly, and *whose* glory *is* in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

IV. 1. Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, *my* dearly beloved.

IMPROVE-

e *Transform our vile body.*] Το σωμα της ταπεινωσεως ημων, might literally be rendered, *the body of our humiliation*, &c. that is, this body in the form of sinful flesh, humbled and degraded as it at present is, and so different from what the body of Adam originally was.

f *So stand fast*, &c.] There is no more reason for making this the beginning of a new *chapter*, than there would be for disjoining the last verse of the 1 Cor. xv. in sense exactly parallel to this, from the preceding discourse on the resurrection with which it is so beautifully and properly connected.

IMPROVEMENT.

And do not we also look for *Christ as a Saviour?* Do we not hope that *this vile body* shall by his all-victorious power be *transformed into the likeness of his own glorious body?* Is it not with this hope that we commit the dust of our friends to the grave? And is it not in this confidence that we think of our own death with hope, and with cheerfulness? Why then is not *our conversation* more *in heaven?* Why have we not more frequent, solemn, and affectionate views of that better world to which we profess to be tending? Alas! have we not reason too often to *weep* for ourselves as well as others, that we *mind earthly things* so much and heavenly no more? But wretched indeed are we, if we fully answer the sad character which, in professing *Christians*, wherever it is *seen*, and much more wherever it is *experienced*, is so justly deplorable! May Divine grace ever preserve those on whom the name of *Christ* is named, those by whom it is known, from making *their belly their god*, (how infamous a deity!) and from that wretched degeneracy of taste, and perverseness of mind, which would lead them to *glory in their shame!* Surely the *cross of Christ* was intended to teach us lessons so contrary to this, that there can be no greater *enmity* to it than to indulge such a temper, especially while we profess to plead for that *cross*, and to glory in it. May we not only abhor such a temper, but bewail it! Yea may *rivers of tears run down our eyes* when we see *God's law* violated and his *gospel* profaned.

SECT. vii.

Ver. 21 20 19 18

Blessed be God, for other and better examples in the *apostolic* age, and that some are likewise to be traced in our own, corrupt as it is; though they are in number less frequent, and in lustre less radiant than of old! Let us however *mark those that walk, as we have Paul for an example.* How different soever our apprehensions in some things may be, may we all *unite* in a care of practical religion, and *whereunto we have already attained, walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing.* And O that our rule may be more and more attended to in every step of our way! and that if in any instance we mistake it, or if we fail in those notions we ought to have of any principles of *Christianity* which are to add a sanction to it, *God may reveal even this unto us*, and teach us to act in a more suitable manner! In every sense, *what we see not, may he teach us*, and *wherein we have done iniquity, may we do no more* (Job xxxiv. 32), but *stand fast in the Lord*, and press forward with greater ardor towards every religious improvement, towards every thing which may increase the beauty

17 16 Chap. iv. 1

SECT. VII. of our character, and reflect a brighter honour upon our profession.

SECT. VIII.

After some particular charges relating to a pacific temper, the Apostle gives more general exhortations to Christian cheerfulness, moderation, prayer, a behaviour universally amiable, and an imitation of the good example he had endeavoured to give them. Philip. IV. 2—9.

PHILIPPIANS IV. 2.

SECT. VIII. I HAVE been exhorting you all to stand fast in the Lord, being supported by those glorious hopes he has given you. And *I* must now particularly *beseech Euodia, and beseech Syntyche, that*, whatever cause of difference may have arisen between them, *they* would sacrifice all to the common engagements of their Christian profession, and *would attend to the same thing in the Lord:* that they would turn all their thoughts into that one channel, and only consider how they may most effectually promote the great purposes of their common calling. *And I also beseech thee, [my] genuine associate*[a], whose intimate friendship supersedes the necessity of naming thee particularly, *that thou wouldst assist those* pious *women who laboured with me in the gospel*[b], in such services as suited their sex and station, and assisted *with Clemens also, and my other fellow-labourers, whose names*, as I have reason in charity to hope, [*are*] *in the book of life*[c] and will there appear to their everlasting honour

Phil. IV. 2.

3

PHIL. IV. 2. I BESEECH Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.

3 And I entreat thee also, true yoke-fellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow-labourers, whose names *are* in the book of life.

a My *genuine associate: συζυγε γνησιε.*] Some understand and render *συζυγος*, as a *proper* name, *the true sizygus;* but as I do not remember any instance in which *γνησιος* is used merely to signify *true* or *honest*, it must, even on that interpretation, refer to the *signification* of the name. As if he had said, *Thou that art sizygus indeed*, the literal import of which is undoubtedly, according to our version, *yoke-fellow;* but as that word in English is generally appropriated to *conjugal life*, and yet, as it stands in the original, is *masculine*, and consequently (waving all other arguments) cannot be taken in that sense, I thought it better to render it *associate*. I think it probable this might be an officer of considerable authority and dignity in the church at Philippi, perhaps husband to one of the pious women here mentioned.

b *Women—who laboured.*] As *womens' preaching* was so expressly forbidden by Paul, we must conclude it was in some other way that these good women were helpful to him *in the gospel;* not so much by *ministering* to his person, though that no doubt they were ready to do as they had opportunity, but by such kind of *services* as I have intimated in the *improvement*, and by the *intelligence* they might give him of the state of *religion* among their female acquaintance, their children or other branches of their respective families.

c *Whose names are in the book of life.*] The names of good men are often represented

honour and joy, though I do not stay to enumerate them here. SECT. viii.

4 Rejoice in the Lord always: *and* again I say, Rejoice.

I am now drawing toward a close, and let this be my farewell. Whatever difficulties and persecutions may attend you, *rejoice always in the Lord;* endeavour to maintain an habitual joy in Christ, and in the hopes and privileges you derive from him. And, *again I say, Rejoice.* I renew the exhortation, as the honour of our Divine Master and your own comfort so much depends on attending to it. Phil. IV. 4.

5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord *is* at hand.

Let your moderation and gentleness, both in the pursuits of the various enjoyments of life, and in supporting the injuries and indignities you may meet with, *be known unto all men,* as visible in the whole of your behaviour; for *the Lord [is] at hand.* He will quickly come to close the scene, and to put an end to all your temporal enjoyments, and all you can suffer from your enemies. 5

6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.

In the mean time, whatever necessities, or whatever oppressions, may arise, *be anxious about nothing,* so as to disquiet or distress your minds, *but in every thing* that occurs, in every condition, and on every occasion, *let your petitions be made known,* and breathed out *before God, in* humble *prayer and* fervent *supplication* [d], to be still mingled *with thanksgiving,* as there is always room for praise and always occasion for it, even in circumstances of the greatest affliction and distress. 6

7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds

And, if you exercise such a temper, *the peace* which the blessed Spirit *of God* diffuses over the souls of his people, that peace, *which far surpasses all understanding* [e] which none can conceive but 7

sented as *registered in heaven,* compare Mal. iii. 16. Where any thing of such a character appeared, it was reasonable, in the judgment of charity, to hope *this* with respect to the persons in whom it was found; but we have no reason to conclude from this expression, that Paul had any particular revelation with regard to these friends he here mentions as certainly destined to salvation.

d *Prayer and supplication.*] The particular difference between προσευχη and δεησει cannot I think be ascertained, though some understand by the former *petition for good,* and by the latter, *deprecation of evil.* Perhaps the latter may be rather more expressive than the former, as implying more earnest importunity; and this sense the word *supplication* seems to carry with it.

e *The peace of God,* &c.] By this expression some understand, that *pacific disposition,* which the gospel requires, interpreting the following phrase, either of its *excelling* all merely *intellectual* endowments (as if it were parallel to 1 Cor. xiii. 2,) or of its *ruling* the other powers of the soul, as υπερεχω is said to signify *having dominion;* Dan. vii. 23; ix. 10; 1 Pet. ii. 13. Compare Rom. xiii. 1. But this is only a *branch* of that temper which we are to cultivate, if we desire that sense of peace and reconciliation with God, of which it is most natural to interpret this clause, as that excellent preacher, *Mr. Du Mant,* has shewn at large in his valuable discourse on

SECT. viii.

Phil. IV. 7.

but he who feels it, and which none can feel but by Divine communication, *shall guard* and defend *your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus*, so that nothing shall be able to break in upon that sweet and sacred tranquility. *As for what remains*, my *brethren*, let me dispatch it in a few words. Be always intent on raising your characters to the greatest height you possibly can: *whatever things are true* and sincere, *whatever things* [*are*] grave and *venerable*[f], *whatever things* [*are*] righteous and *equitable*, *whatever things* [*are*] chaste and *pure*, *whatever things are friendly* and kind[g], *whatever things* [*are*] *reputable* and truly ornamental, *if* [*there be any* real *virtue* in them, *and if* [*there be*] *any* just *praise* resulting from them, *think* frequently *of these things*, consider what they are, how highly you are obliged to regard them, and endeavour more and more to abound in the practice of them. *And*, for a farther illustration and confirmation of this advice, I will add, *whatever things ye have learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me*, whatever good lessons I have given you, whatever worthy of imitation you may have observed in my conduct, while I abode among you, or may since have been credibly informed of, *these things* be ye ever careful to *practise: and the God of peace shall* always *be with you:* for I have the testimony of my conscience, that my conduct has always been pleasing in his sight, and that your imitation of it will be the way to engage the Divine presence and blessing, which I most heartily wish you.

8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things.

9 Those things which ye have both learned and received, and heard and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

IMPROVE-

on this text. See his *Serm.* p. 307, &c. Thus *the peace of Christ*, John xiv. 27, signifies the peace which he gives, or of which he is the author. For the emphasis of the word φρουρησει, see the *note* on 1 Pet. i. 5.

f Grave and *venerable*.] The word σεμνος is rendered *grave*, and σεμνοτης *gravity*, 1 Tim. iii. 4, 8, 11; Tit. ii. 1, 2, 7. *Dr. Lardner* has very well expressed the design of the exhortation when he says, "That it is to recommend to Christians a concern for their character, a care so to behave as to secure to themselves some degree of respect and esteem; that they should avoid unbecoming levity in word, action, habit, and outward behaviour; which tends to render men despicable; and makes them appear weak, mean, and of no consequence in the eyes of others." *Lardner's Serm.* p. 319. And I hope it will be remembered how particularly this *gravity* is recommended to *ministers* in the places cited above.

g *Friendly* and kind.] This seems the more exact import of προσφιλη than *lovely*; though there is certainly a *lovely charm* in such *friendly* things.

IMPROVEMENT.

How condescending is this great *apostle* in the kind notice he takes, not only of his *fellow-labourers*, in the work of the Christian ministry, but even of the *women*, who, according to the opportunity which God gave them, lent their assistance for the *service of the gospel*, whatever that assistance were; whether by their *prayers*, or their familiar *addresses* to their friends, or their kind *offices* to the bodies of those in distress, or that uniform *example* by which the several virtues of *Christianity* were recommended, and the Christian profession adorned! Let none then *object the privacy* of their stations, as if that must necessarily cut them off from usefulness, but let them endeavour diligently and humbly to do their utmost, and pray for increasing wisdom and grace, to guide them in their deliberations and resolves. SECT. viii. Ver. 3

It will be very subservient to this happy design, that *Christians*, in whatever stations they are, *should be of one mind in the Lord*; that they should endeavour to lay aside mutual prejudices, and unite *in love* if they cannot perfectly agree in all their *sentiments*. Then may they *rejoice in the Lord*; and it is to be urged upon them *again* and *again*, that they do so. It is to be urged, not only as a *privilege*, *but a duty*. And surely, if we consider what a Saviour he is, and how perfectly accommodated to what our necessities require, and what our hearts could wish, we shall easily enter into the reasonableness of the exhortation. 2 4

Let us often represent it to ourselves as a truth equally important and certain, that *the Lord is at hand*. By his *Spiritual* presence he is ever near us, and the day of his final and *visible* appearance is continually approaching. Let our hearts be duly influenced by it, and particularly be taught that holy *moderation*, which becomes those who see the season so nearly advancing, when *all these things shall be dissolved*. And let this abate our *anxiety* about them. Why should we be solicitous about things which shall so soon be as if they had never been? Let us seek the repose of our *minds in prayer*. *In every thing by humble supplication let us make known our requests unto God*. And let us mingle *thankful acknowledgments* for past favours with our addresses to the throne of grace for what we farther need. This will establish the serenity of our souls, *so that the peace of God*, more sweet and delightful than any who have not experienced it can conceive, *will keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus*, and make our state secure as well as pleasant. 5 6 7

Let

SECT. viii.

Ver. 8

Let us study the *beautiful* and the venerable, as well as what is *true and just in actions*, and pursue every thing which shall, as such, approve itself to our consciences, every thing in which there shall be *virtue and praise*. Let us always in this view endeavour to keep the *moral sense uncorrupted*, and pray that God would if I may be allowed the expression, preserve *the delicacy of our mind* in this respect, that a holy sensibility of soul may warn and alarm us, to guard against every distant appearance of evil. That 9 so cautious of venturing to the *utmost boundaries* of what may be *innocent*, we may be more secure than we could otherwise be from the danger of passing over to the *confines of guilt*, and of wandering from one degree of it to another. And, while we exhort others to such a care, let us ourselves endeavour to be like this holy *apostle*, among the brighter *examples* of it.

SECT. IX.

The Apostle concludes with his acknowledgments to the Philippians, for the liberal supply they had sent him: at the same time speaking of the independency of temper to which Divine grace had brought him; and transmits Christian salutations from himself and his friends at Rome. Phil. IV. 10,—*to the end.*

PHILIPPIANS IV. 10.

SECT. ix.

Phil. IV. 10.

BUT to return to my own affairs, and your conduct to me. *I have rejoiced greatly in the Lord* Jesus Christ[a], to whose providence and grace I ultimately ascribe it, *that your* affectionate *care of me has now* sprung up *again* and *flourished*, like vegetables which, after having seemed during the winter to be dead in the earth sprout up at the returning spring with new beauty and pleasure. *With respect to which you were indeed careful before*, as I assuredly believe, *but ye wanted* that convenient *opportunity* which the coming of Epaphroditus gave you, of transmitting to me the fruit of your liberality and 11 bounty. But I would *not* have you think *that I speak with respect to want*, as if I was impatient of that, or meant to extort any thing from you, if future necessities should arise, as by dint of importunity. *For* I bless God, I have no need of

PHIL. IV. 10.

BUT I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.

11 Not that I speak in respect of want; for I

a *Rejoiced greatly in the Lord.*] This shews the deep sense the *apostle* entertained of the providental interposition of Christ in the seasonable supply he had received from the Philippians; and many other traces of this kind appear in the writings of St. Paul.

b Initiated,

SECT. ix.

Phil. IV. 12.

I have learned in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content.

12 I know both *how* to be abased, and I know *how* to abound: every where, and in all things I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

of betaking myself to such low expedients, as *I have learned, in whatever circumstances I am, to be contented. I know both* [*how*] *to be abased,* when it pleases God to humble me, *and I know* [*how*] *to abound,* when his providence appears for my supply. *In every* [*place*] *and in all* [*conditions*] *I am instructed,* and find myself, as it were, initiated into this great mystery[b], so needful to the Christian, and especially the apostolic life, *both to be fed plentifully* without transgressing the rules of temperance, *and to suffer hunger* without murmuring or discontent. I know how *both to abound,* without too fond an attachment to the world, when my circumstances in it are most easy, *and to fall short* of the agreeable accommodations of life, yea, and to be in necessity, without being greatly disturbed at such a change, or feeling any painful anxiety on account of it. In one word, whatever is to be done, whatever is to be borne, *I am sufficient for all things;* have vigour enough for the one, have patience and fortitude enough for the other: but then I would not be understood to arrogate any thing of this to myself, but would most humbly and affectionately acknowledge, that it is all *through Christ who enables me,* and furnishes my spirit with a strength of which it is naturally destitute,

13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

13

14 Notwithstanding ye have well done that ye did communicate with my affliction.

You see by this that the happiness of my life doth not depend upon any external circumstance, nor any supply I can receive from my most generous friends. *Nevertheless, ye did well in communicating* so liberally *to my* relief, in that *affliction* under which I am now suffering; as it is certain the servants of Christ are not less worthy of being regarded and assisted by you, for those attainments which by his grace they have been enabled to make in the temper which their profession demands. And in this respect, I am under peculiar obligations to you, my dear brethren, *for ye, O Philippians, well know, that in the beginning of* our mission, when we came and preached *the gospel* among you,

14

15 Now, ye Philippians, know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated

15

as

b Initiated, &c.] This is well known to be the peculiar sense of μεμυημαι, and it has a spirit here which I could not persuade myself to suppress, as the *apostle,* by the choice of this word, seems to intimate to every *Greek reader* how much he esteemed these good dispositions of mind here spoken of beyond all their boasted *initiations,* whatever *mysteries* they might be supposed to contain.

c *As*

SECT. IX.

Phil. IV. 15. *as I was departing from Macedonia*[c] (which is now about twelve years ago[d]), *no church communicated with me in the affair of giving and receiving*, that is, no Christian society, as such, made any collection for my personal support and assistance, *but you, only*; *For*, not contented with ministering to my necessities, while I was with you; *even* when I resided *in Thessalonica*, though it was so considerable a city, and the metropolis of your country, and though the gospel was so affectionately received by some there, yet *you sent* thither *once and again to* the relief of *my necessity*[e].

cated with me, as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.

16 For even in Thessalonica, ye sent once and again unto my necessity.

17 I mention this in so particular a manner, *not because I desire a gift*, or would extort any future favour from you, by the recollection of the past, *but* this *I desire*, *that* in such ways, as may be most for the honour of God, and the credit of your profession, *fruit may abound, to your* comfortable *account* in the day of the Lord.

17 Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.

18 At present you need not be solicitous about me, *for I have all* I can wish to make my bonds sit easy upon me, *and* do indeed *abound* more than usual in the convenient accommodations of life: *I am full, having received by Epaphroditus your present*, which I cannot but esteem as *a fragrant odour, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God*, to whose glory it is, I know ultimately devoted, while for his sake you are so ready to relieve his ministers. And I have the pleasure to think you will not on the whole be losers by such liberalities, *but* that *my God*, graciously smiling upon your tribute of grateful love, *will supply all your wants, according to his* inexhaustible *riches*, which he cannot but possess who is seated *in* supreme *glory* and majesty above, and scatters down not merely the blessings of providence, but of grace, *by Christ Jesus*, which I hope he will largely impart to you.

18 But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things *which were sent* from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.

19 But my God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory, [f]by Christ Jesus.

20 *Now to our God and Father*, to him whom we are encouraged to regard under that endearing character

20 Now unto God and our Father, *be* glory

c *As I was departing*, &c.] So I think it best to render ἐξηλθον, because both Philippi and Thessalonica (ver. 16) lay in Macedonia; and no translation can be more literal.

d About twelve years ago.] This *epistle* (as we have observed in the introduction) seems to have been written towards the end of Paul's first imprisonment at Rome, which was about *A. D.* 63; and he first preached at Philippi about the year 51.

e *To my necessity.*] It appears by 1 Thess. ii. 9, 2 Thess. iii. 7—9, that it was not to the liberality of the inhabitants of that city, but chiefly to the labour of his own hands, that Paul owed his subsistence during his abode among them.

f The

ry for ever and ever. Amen.

character, and in whom, through the great Redeemer, we are daily rejoicing, [*be*] *glory for ever and ever. Amen.* SECT. ix.

Phil. IV. 21.

21 Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you.

I will not swell my postscript by a long catalogue of names, but desire you to *salute every saint in Christ Jesus*; and to assure them all, known or unknown, that they are dear to me, and that, in general or particular petitions, I bear them always upon my heart. *The brethren who are with me*, my dear fellow-labourers, with whom I most frequently converse, *salute you*, sincerely wishing you prosperity and peace. And not only these brethren, who sojourn with me, and bear a part in the ministerial work, but *All the* other *saints* here at Rome *salute* 22
you[f], *but especially they of Cesar's household*, who, sensible of the goodness of God to them, in causing his grace to visit them, and dwell with them in such a situation, have a particular regard for their brethren every where, and desire to be particularly remembered to you.

22 All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Cesar's household.

23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

To conclude all with the best wishes my most 23
endeared love can form for you, *may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*, the sanctifying and comfortable influences of his Spirit, [*be*] *with you all*, now and at all times, to support you under all your trials, and to animate you to persevere even unto the end! *Amen.*

IMPROVEMENT.

WHAT a noble spirit of generosity and gratitude appears in Ver.
the *apostle!* How handsomely does he acknowledge the favour 10, 14
of his friends, still maintaining the dignity of his character, re- 15, 16
joicing in the tokens of their affection to him, chiefly as *fruits abounding to their account*, and as it would be a *sweet savour ac-* 17
ceptable to God. And surely the *incense* which they were pre- 18
senting at the Divine altar, would also by its fragrancy *delight* them, surely they enjoyed what they had of their own, whether it were more or less, with greater satisfaction, when they were imparting something with filial gratitude to their *Father in Christ*, to make his bonds and imprisonment the less grievous.

The apostle freely professes, that he received these tokens of their

[f] *The brethren*—and *all the saints salute you.*] From this distinction I conclude, with Mr. *Peirce*, that it is highly probable the *ministers* at Rome were called by the name of *brethren*. *Peirce's Vindic.* p. 358.

SECT. IX.

their affection with pleasure; but much happier was he in that noble *superiority* of mind to external circumstances which he so amiably describes. Truly rich, and truly great, in knowing *how to be content* in every circumstance; possessed of the noblest kind of *learning*, in having *learned how to be exalted, and to be abased,*
11, 12 *to abound* or to *suffer need.* This all-sufficiency, of which he boasts, is it haughty *arrogance?* far from it; he is never *humbler* than when he speaks of himself in this exalted language. It is in
13 the strength of another that he glories. *I am sufficient for all things through Christ which strengthens me.* And here the *feeblest* Christian may join issue with him, and say, "If *Christ* will strengthen me, *I also am sufficient for all.*" His grace therefore let us constantly seek, and endeavour to maintain a continual dependance upon it, praying for ourselves, and for each other, that the *grace of*
23 *the Lord Jesus Christ* may be *with us.* This grace produced and maintained *saints*, where of all places upon earth, we should least have expected to find them, *even the palace of Cesar, of Nero.*
22 Let it encourage us to look to God to *supply our* spiritual *necessi-*
19 *ties out of the riches of his glory in Christ.* And, in a cheerful hope that he will do it, let us through *him* ascribe *glory to our God and Father for ever and ever. Amen.*

THE END OF THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR ON THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR,

A PARAPHRASE

ON

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO THE

COLOSSIANS.

WITH

CRITICAL NOTES, AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.

A

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON

THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

COLOSSE was a large populous city of Phrygia in Asia Minor, and stood not far from Laodicea: but though it appears from this epistle that a Christian church was established in it, we have no account by whom, or at what time, it was founded. Some have concluded from chap. ii. 1, that St. Paul had never been there himself; but though perhaps nothing can be certainly inferred from that passage in relation to it, yet there is great reason to believe that, if the *apostle* had been personally concerned in the first preaching of the gospel there, so important a fact would not have been entirely omitted in the history of the Acts. It is not however at all improbable, but they might be converted while Paul resided at Ephesus, especially considering that he spent no less than three years in that city, and preached with so much success, that St. Luke tells us (Acts xix. 20), that *all they who dwelt in* Asia *heard the word of the Lord, both* Jews *and* Greeks.

As to the *date* of this epistle, little need be added here, after what has been already observed in the *Introduction to the Ephesians* (p. 315). It appears highly probable, for reasons there given, that it was wrote at the same time with *that to the Ephesians*, and they were both sent together by *Tychicus* and *Onesimus*, towards the close of Paul's first imprisonment at Rome, which was about the *year of our Lord* 63, or the *ninth* of the *Emperor Nero* (Compare chap. iv. 3, 7, 9. See also Vol. VIII. § 60, *note* g, p. 305).

The Colossians appear, from several passages in this epistle, to have borne an honourable character for their piety, and the zeal they discovered for the gospel; but we find, from the cautions the *apostle* gives them in the *second chapter*, that they were in some danger of being drawn aside by the subtleties of the Heathen philosophers, and the insinuations of some *Jewish zealots*, who insisted upon the necessity of conforming to the ceremonies of the *Mosaic law*. Accordingly the grand design of this epistle is to excite

excite the Colossians by the most persuasive arguments to a temper and behaviour worthy their sacred character, and to secure them from the influence of those *Pagan sophists*, or *Jewish bigots*, who would seduce them from the purity of the Christian faith.

In pursuance of this general plan, the *apostle*, having joined Timothy's name with his own in the inscription of the epistle, begins with expressing his thankfulness to God for calling them into his church, and giving them a share in the important blessings of the gospel; at the same time declaring the great satisfaction with which he heard of their faith and love, and assuring them of his constant prayers, that they might receive larger supplies of Divine wisdom and grace, to enable them to walk worthy of their high character and hopes as Christians (chap. i. 1—14.)—And, to make them more sensible of the excellence of this new dispensation into which they were admitted, he represents to them in very sublime terms the dignity of our Saviour's Person, as the image of God, the Creator of all things, and the Head of the church; whose death God was pleased to appoint as the means of abolishing the obligation of the *Mosaic law*, which separated between the Jews and Gentiles, and of reconciling sinners to himself, ver. 15—23.—From this view of the excellency of Christ's Person, and the riches of redeeming grace, the *apostle* takes occasion to express the cheerfulness with which he suffered in the cause of the gospel, and his earnest solicitude to fulfil his ministry among them in the most successful manner; assuring them that he felt the most tender concern both for *them* and the other Christians in the neighbourhood, that they might be established in their adherence to the Christian faith, (ver. 24, *to the end.* Chap. ii. 1—7.)

Having given these general exhortations, the *apostle* proceeds to caution the Colossians against suffering their minds to be corrupted from the simplicity of the gospel, either by Pagan philosophy, or Jewish tradition, reminding them of the obligation their baptism laid them under of submitting to Christ, as the only Law-giver and Head of his church; who had totally abolished the *ceremonial* law, and discharged them from any farther regard to it, ver. 8—19. And, since upon embracing Christianity they were to consider themselves as dead with respect to any other religious profession, he shews the absurdity of being still subject to the appointments of the *Mosaic law*; and cautions them against those corrupt additions to Christianity which some were attempting to introduce, especially by rigours and superstitions of their own devising. And as the most effectual means for their security, he exhorts them, as they were risen with Christ, to keep their thoughts fixed on him as their Lord and life, and on that better world whither he was ascended, and to which they had the prospect of being admitted, ver. 20, *to the end.* Chap. iii. 1—4.— From this glorious hope, the *apostle* presses them to guard against every degree of uncleanness, malice, covetousness, falsehood, and whatever was inconsistent with the purity of that new dispensation into which they were entered; and exhorts them to abound in the practice of

of meekness, forbearance, humility and love, and to accustom themselves to those devout exercises and evangelical views which would have the most direct tendency to improve the Christian temper, ver. 5—17.

After these general precepts, the *apostle* proceeds to recommend to the Colossians such a care in discharging the duties correspondent to the several relations of life, as would be most honourable to their Christian profession, and particularly enumerates those of husbands and wives, parents, and children, masters, and servants. And to assist them in the performance of these duties, he exhorts them to be constant in prayer; and for the credit of their religion, advises them to maintain a prudent obliging behaviour to their Gentile brethren, ver. 18, *to the end.* Chap. iv. 1—6.

The *apostle* closes his epistle with recommending to them Tychicus and Onesimus, of whom he speaks in very honourable terms, and to whom he refers them for a more particular account of the state of the church at Rome; and having inserted salutations from Aristarchus, Epaphras, their minister (who was then with Paul) and others, he gives directions for reading his epistle at Laodicea, addresses a solemn admonition to Archippus and concludes with his salutation, wrote with his own hand, ver. 7, *to the end.*

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO THE

COLOSSIANS.

SECTION I.

The Apostle begins his epistle to the Colossians with declaring his thankfulness to God for calling them into his church, and his desire in general, that they might receive an abundance of Divine grace, to enable them to walk worthy of so great a privilege. Col. I. 1—14.

Col. I. 1.

PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus *our* brother,

Colossians I. 1.

I *PAUL*[a], who have the honour to be *an apostle of Jesus Christ*, not having intruded myself into the office, but being called to it *by the will of God*, who was pleased to display the sovereignty of his grace in choosing me, one of the greatest of sinners, to so high *and* holy an office, do now join with *Timothy*, *a* faithful *brother*, and fellow-labourer in the gospel-ministry in sending this epistle, *To the holy and faithful brethren*[b] *in Christ*, who are resident *at Colosse* 2

SECT. i. Col. I. 1.

2 To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ,

a *Paul.*] It may be as proper here as elsewhere to observe, than many *critics* have thought this Greek name was taken by the *apostle* instead of that of *Saul*, though it had been the name of the first *Jewish king*, who was also a Benjamite (which might be a farther recommendation of it in this instance), out of special regard to the Gentiles, to whose service he was so peculiarly devoted.

b *Holy and faithful brethren.*] I cannot think they are called *holy* and *faithful* here, only or chiefly on account of their adhering to the purity of the Christian faith, in

SECT. i.

losse and the adjacent places; heartily wishing *grace unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ*, through whom he owns that relation to us, and sends down upon us the blessings of providence and grace.

Col. 1. 2.

Christ, which are at Colosse: grace *be* unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 I may say it in my own name, and that of my dear brother Timothy, though not personally acquainted with you, that *we* do unfeignedly *give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*[c] upon your account, and that we are *always praying for you;* very frequently making express mention of you before the throne of Divine grace, and habitually wishing your advancement in religion, and your eternal sal-

3 We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you;

4 vation. *Having heard*, with unspeakable pleasure, *of your* sincere *faith in Christ Jesus* our Lord, *and* active generous *love towards all the saints* who are partakers with you in that holy calling which God hath given us by him, whe-

4 Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love *which ye have* to all the saints;

5 ther they be Jews or Gentiles; On this account we offer our prayers to God, and we are blessing him *for the* better *hope*[d], *which is laid up for you in the heavens*, and which will in due time be accomplished, *of which ye have heard before* to such happy purpose, *in the true* and infallible *word of the gospel*, which was preached among you in all its genuine purity and in-

5 For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel:

6 tegrity: Of that gospel *which hath* now, through the singular goodness of God to the Gentiles, whom he seemed so long to have neglected, *appeared unto you, even as in all the world;*

6 Which is come unto you, as *it is* in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as *it doth* also

in opposition to those that urged the necessity of observing the Jewish law. This was indeed one instance of their fidelity, but I think it greatly impoverishes and debases the sense of such an *extensive* phrase to reduce it within such narrow bounds. Many scores of *criticisms* in some modern *commentators* of reputation are liable to the same exception; but I rather choose to leave it to the reader's observation, than to stay to point out every example of it. As the *epistle* is inscribed to a society by profession separated from the world and consecrated to God, it was reasonably to be hoped, in the judgment of charity, that most of them answered that profession, which sufficiently justifies such an address.

c *To the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, &c.] Some would render it, to *God even the Father*, which would be much more tolerable than our translation, *to God and the Father*, as if they were different persons. But it may seem that the prefixing the article only *to God*, τω Θεω και πατρι, not merely warrants but demands this rendering. Franckius has a good observation here, which illustrates the beauty of many scriptures. The order that would seem most *artificial* is transposed to make the sense *plainer*. It is not *having heard of your faith I bless God*, but *vice versa*. The same observation may be applied to ver. 9—11.

d *For the hope*, &c.] There is an *ambiguity* in the connection of this clause; it may either signify, that the *apostle* gives thanks *for this their hope*, supposing the 4th verse to come in as a *parenthesis;* or it may more directly refer to the immediately preceding words, and intimate that a *partnership* in this blessed *hope* cemented the hearts of these good *men*. In either sense the connection is instructive, but I prefer the former as more *natural*.

e *In*

so in you, since the day ye heard *of it*, and knew the grace of God in truth:

7 As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellow-servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;

8 Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.

9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard *it*, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding:

10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

11 Strengthened with all might according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-

world[e]; being intended for an universal religion. *And* accordingly it proceeds in its progress, and *bringeth forth* substantial *fruit* elsewhere, *as also* [*it hath done*] *among you, from the day in which ye have heard and known the grace of God, in* that saving word of solid *truth*[f] and everlasting life which hath been sent unto you. *As ye have also learnt* it *from Epaphras,* 7 *our beloved fellow-servant* in the work of the Lord, *who is the faithful minister of Christ for your sakes,* whom he has appointed to labour among you, and to preside over you; *Who hath* 8 *also manifested to us your* Christian *love in the* bonds of that one *Spirit* who unites all our hearts. *Therefore we also, from the day that we* 9 first *heard* [*of it*], *cease not to pray for you, and to offer up our* most earnest and affectionate *requests, that ye may be* abundantly *filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding*[g], in the right apprehension of spiritual objects, wrought and increased in you by the influence of the Divine Spirit upon your minds: *That* so *you may* be animated to *walk* 10 in a manner *worthy of* that connection in which you stand with *the Lord* Jesus Christ[h], and the obligations you are under *to* him, conducting yourselves in *all* respects so as may be well *pleasing* in his sight, *fruitful and increasing* still more and more abundantly *in every good work, to the* practical *acknowledgment of God* in all his attributes and relations to you. *Being* inwardly 11 *strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power,* that you may be formed *to all* the most exemplary degrees of *patience,* under the persecution

SECT. i.

Col. I. 6.

e *In all the world.*] In all the *provinces* of the *Roman empire,* as the phrase often signifies, and it may no doubt be put for many or most of them.

f *The grace of God in truth.*] Some understand *truth* as expressive of *substance,* in opposition to the comparative *shadows* of the Mosaic law.

g *Wisdom and spiritual understanding.*] It is exceedingly difficult to affix any exactly *distinct* ideas to the words *wisdom, knowledge,* and *understanding.* Some explain *wisdom,* as expressing an *acquaintance with gospel-mysteries;* and *understanding,* as implying *prudence* in *conduct,* while others invert this interpretation. It is evident to me, that the same idea is not invariably annexed to them in all places; for *knowledge* is sometimes used to express something in degree at least *inferior to wisdom,* 1 Cor. xii. 8; whereas here it evidently *includes wisdom;* and the clause *spiritual understanding* seems to be *explicatory* of the wisdom here spoken of, and not expressive of any thing different from it.

h *That ye may walk worthy of the Lord.*] The apostle seems here most pathetically to propose the great subject and design of this *epistle,* which was chiefly intended to excite them to a temper and behaviour worthy their Christian character. And this indeed is the leading view in all the *epistles* of this excellent *apostle,* and the want of regard to so obvious a *key,* has led many into subtleties of interpretation, which have had no foundation but in their own ingenious reveries.

i *Long-*

SECT. i.

persecution you meet with in the world, *and long-suffering*[i] under all provocation; which I wish you may be enabled to bear, not only with composure and dignity of spirit, but *with joy* too, while you expect that blessed and exalted hope which the gospel sets before you. Yes, my brethren, I desire, that instead of lamenting the calamities to which so holy a profession exposes us, you may be continually *giving thanks to the Father* of all grace and mercy, who hath called us all, whether originally Jews or Gentiles, into the communion of his church, and *who hath*, by the renewing and sanctifying influences of his Spirit upon our hearts, *made us*, though naturally so much indisposed for it, now to become *fit for a part in the inheritance*[k], which he had prepared and assigned as the final reward and felicity *of the saints*; who, when they have passed through the dark scenes which Providence has allotted them here, shall remain *in* immortal *light* and glory. Yea, we reckon it our perpetual duty to render these acknowledgments to him *who hath*, by the declarations of his gospel and the influences of his grace, *rescued us from the power of darkness*[l], *and transferred* [*us*] from the territories of Satan, the prince of it, *into the* glorious and happy *kingdom of his beloved Son; In whom we have* ample *redemption*, from the tyranny of all our enemies, and from the destruction with which the Divine justice threatened us, *by* the pouring forth of *his blood*, [*even*] *the remission of sins*, for which we were ourselves incapable of making any satisfaction, and which, if they had not been thus expiated, would have sunk us down to final condemnation and despair.

Col. I. 11. long-suffering with joyfulness;

12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light;

13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son;

14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins.

IMPROVE-

i *Long-suffering.*] See *note* c on Rom. ii. 1, Vol. VIII. p. 395.

k *Part in the inheritance.* Μερίδα κλήρου is the *proportion of an inheritance* which falls by lot to each of those among whom it is divided; alluding, as Dr. Whitby supposes, to the manner in which the land of Canaan was cantoned out to the tribes. Dr. Scott endeavours to shew that the phrase *saints in light*, particularly refers to the *lustre* of the *glorified body* of the saints, who shall be clothed after the resurrection with a visible lucid glory, resembling that of the *Shechinah*. *Scott's Christian Life*, Vol. III p. 198, 199.

l *Rescued us from the power of darkness.* Many have thought the *apostle* speaks of himself as one of the Gentile converts; but we have great reason to believe, that when Divine grace made him sensible of what he had been in his Pharisaical state, while a *blasphemer*, a *persecutor*, and *injurious*, he saw himself to have been under the *power of darkness*, as Christ represents those of the Jews to have been, who influenced by the *spirits of darkness*, were combined against him, Luke xxii. 53. Yet none can doubt, but that the ignorance and sin, confusion and misery, which reigned in the Gentile world, was also in the *apostle's* thoughts when he used this expression.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. i.

WE see in this *epistle*, as in all the rest, the most genuine discoveries of the real temper of the *apostle*. The same views which he had opened upon other churches, the same kind sentiments which he had expressed towards them, does he here discover and express; still glorying in his *office as an apostle of Christ*: still wishing to his Christian brethren *grace and peace*, as beyond all comparison the best of blessings; still congratulating them on *their faith in Christ and love to each other*; still making continual *mention of them in his prayers*; and recommending them to the grace of God, in which we, as they, continue to stand. Ver. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

For ever adored be the Divine goodness, *that the word of God*, which sets before us an *hope laid up in the heavens*, hath been *manifested unto us and all the world!* Let us often examine ourselves as to the *fruit* it hath brought forth in our own hearts and lives. Let us be solicitous for ourselves and others, that we may in a *more spiritual and intelligent manner be filled with the knowledge of his will*, in all its compass and extent, so far as he has been pleased to reveal it; and that this knowledge may produce in us the most substantial effects, so as to engage *us to walk worthy of the Lord*, whose name we bear, and in a manner which he may behold with approbation and pleasure; *being fruitful and increasing more and more in every good work*, that our barrenness may not reproach our profession, and that the great vital truths of Christianity may not seem to be dead or dormant in our hearts. 6, 9, 10

To give them their full energy on our souls, we need the operation of *God's glorious and mighty power*, by which they may not only be established in *all patient long-suffering*, but inspired with holy *joy*. Then shall we breathe forth lively acknowledgments *to the Father*, who hath revealed unto us that *glorious inheritance* which he distributes amongst *the saints of light*, even that kingdom where they all reign in everlasting purity, friendship and joy. May he *prepare* us to receive our lot, and take up our abode there! For this end *did he rescue us from the power of darkness*, and call us to the external privileges of those who consitute *the kingdom of his dear Son:* for this did he set before us that *redemption* which we have *in his blood, even the remission of our sins*. And O! how inexcusable shall we be if we make ourselves the slaves of sin, while we have our abode in the visible *kingdom of Christ*; and trampling upon his *blood, and the act of* 11, 12, 13, 14

grace

SECT. i. *grace* which is established in it, seal ourselves up under a guilt never to be removed; *a guilt heightened* to infinite degrees of provocation and malignity by the very *methods* which have been taken to expiate it!

SECT. II.

To promote their thankfulness for their part in the gospel, and engage their adherence to it in its greatest purity, the apostle represents to them the dignity of our blessed Redeemer's person, and the methods he hath taken to make reconciliation for sinners. Col. I. 15—23.

Colossians I. 15.

SECT. ii. I HAVE just been speaking to you of that redemption which we have in the blood of Christ, even the remission of our sins; and I must now lead you more attentively to reflect *who* he is, to whom we are under such immense obligations. And you will find his dignity and glory to be such, that you can never conceive of any thing adequate to them. For he *is* indeed *the* brightest and most express *image of the invisible* and eternal *God*[a], whom no man hath seen at any time, nor can see; [*and*] *the First-born of the whole creation*[b], existing before it, and begotten to inherit it as the great Heir of all.

Col. I. 15. 16 And his nature has a transcendent excellency, infinitely superior to any thing that is made; *for by him were all things created*[c], *things in heaven and things on earth.* From him were derived the *visible* splendor of the celestial luminaries, the sun the moon, and the stars, even all the

Col. I. 15. WHO is the image of the invisible God, the First-born of every creature:

16 For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or

a *The image of the invisible—God.*] It is surprising to observe how expressly Philo the Jew, in more places than one, calls the *Logos* or *word* of which he speaks, *the image of God.* See Dr. *Scott's Christian Life*, Vol. III. p. 559.

b *The first-born of the whole creation.*] Mr. Fleming would render, πρωτοτοκος πασης κτισεως, *the first Creator*, or Producer, *of every creature.* Mr. Pierce observes, πρωτοτοκος sometimes signifies *the dam that produces its first birth*, and then the sense would be, He who, as it were, at the first-birth, by the exertion of his creating power, brought forth all things. It is certain that Christ is often called God's *First-born* his *First-begotten*, and his *Only-begotten Son.* Psal. lxxxix. 27; Rom. viii. 29; Heb. i. 6; John i. 14, 18; iii. 16, 18; 1 John iv. 9; and therefore I did not think it warrantable to change our *translation* of that word; though πασης κτισεως, so naturally signifies *the whole creation*, and that version seems to give so much nobler and more determinate a sense, than *every creature*, that I could have no doubt as to the reasonableness of preferring it.

c *By him were all things created.*] To interpret this as the Socinians do, of the *new creation* in a spiritual sense, is so unnatural, that one could hardly believe, if the evidence were not so undeniably strong, that any set of learned *commentators* could fall into it.

d *First-*

SECT. ii.

Col. 1. 16.

or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him.

the hosts of these lower heavens, *and* from him the yet brighter glories of *invisible* and angelic beings, who dwell and reign above, by whatever names and honours distinguished; *whether* [*they be*] *thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers;* all the various orders of heavenly spirits, which may be designed by such or the like titles, the import of which is not exactly known to us mortals. Yet these, with *all* other *things* in the celestial as well as terrestrial regions, *were created by him and for him;* they are the productions of his almighty power, and were made that he might be exalted and glorified in them.

17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

17 *And he is before all*, both in the duration and dignity of his nature, *and in him all things*, which constitute this universal system, do continually *subsist* in that harmonious order of being, which renders it one beautiful whole; whereas, unsupported by him, it would immediately run into confusion, or fall back into its original nothing.

18 And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the Beginning, the First-born from the dead: that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.

18 *And* it is worthy of our particular consideration, that *he*, who *is* thus *the Head* and Lord of all, is in a peculiar sense the Head *of the church*, [*which*] he [*is*] graciously pleased to own as *the body*, and which he with amazing condescension has united with the strictest bonds to himself, taking it under his peculiar guardianship, government and care: [*even he*] *who is*, as we before declared *the Beginning* of the creation of God, and having stooped to assume our nature and to die in it, was also appointed to be *the First-born from the dead*[d], the first who ever rose to an endless life; *that* so *in all things he might have the pre-eminence*, suitable to the infinitely superior dignity of his nature above all created beings.

19 For it pleased *the Father*, that in him should all fulness dwell;

19 *For in him* his Father is ever well-pleased, as he declared by a voice from heaven: and *it was his* sovereign *pleasure*, as dwelling in him, to inhabit the whole fulness of the church: and, to qualify him for the high office which he sustains, he hath appointed *that all fulness* of gifts and graces *should* ever *reside* in him[e], even all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

And

d *First-born from the dead.*] Mr. *Fleming* would render it the *Efficient* (or *Prince*, who is) the *first raiser of the dead. (Christol.* Vol. I. p. 216.) But I have given here, as every where else, what appeared to me the *easiest, surest*, and most *natural* sense, and the best commentators are agreed in it.

e *That all fulness should reside* in him.] There is undoubtedly an *ambiguity* in the original phrase, εν αυτω παν το πληρωμα κατοικησαι.

SECT. ii.

And it hath pleased the Father likewise *by him to reconcile all things to himself*[f], that is, to the purposes of his own glory, *having made peace by the blood of the cross;* by which the design of the ceremonial law having been answered, the obligations of it were abolished, and the wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles broken down. Yea *by him* [*God hath reconciled all things*] to each other; *whether things on earth,* that is, Jews or Gentiles, *or things in heaven,* that is, celestial spirits, who are now reconciled to fallen men, and incorporated with them into one holy and happy society.

Col. I. 20.

20 And (having made peace through the blood of his cross), by him to reconcile all things unto himself, by him, *I say,* whether *they be* things in earth, or things in heaven.

21 *And* the calling of the Gentile nations into the church is one important part of this plan; so that *you, who were once alienated, and enemies in* [*your*] *mind* to the blessed God *by wicked works, he hath now reconciled* to himself and to 22 the society of his people. And this he hath done *in the body of his flesh*[g], which he hath assumed, and *by* that *death* which he hath suffered therein, *that* so *he might present you holy and blameless, and free from all accusation in his* 23 *sight.* You will certainly be so presented, *if ye continue established and grounded in the faith* in which you have been instructed, *and be not* by any floods of affliction, or tempests of temptation, *removed* and carried away *from the* important

21 And you that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in *your* mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled.

22 In the body of his flesh, through death, to present you holy and unblamable, and unreprovable in his sight:

23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope

κατοικησαι. Mr. *Pierce* would render it *in or by him to inhabit all fulness,* that is, the whole church or body of Christ: and that rendering would include the sense of ours, referring to God's dwelling in Christ, and so with us. Compare Rom. xi. 12, 25. But I was cautious of altering our version of so important a text without certain and evident necessity. But some critics have observed, that when what *grammarians* call an *infinite verb* is in the New Testament joined with the word ευδοκεω, it signifies *the action of him who is pleased,* which would indeed make the passage parallel to Eph. ii. 21, 22. Compare Eph. i. 22, where the *church* is called πληρωμα, that is, *God's fulness.* See *Pierce in loc.* As the word *Father* is not in the original, Mr. *Reynolds* would render it *he* (that is, *Christ was pleased that in him (i. e.* in himself) *all fulness should dwell. Reyn. on Angels,* p. 76.) But not to insist on the harshness of the interpretation in other respects, it seems most evident that the whole connection determines the sense quite another way.

f *By him to reconcile all things,* &c.] Dr. Whitby would render it, "by him to make all things friendly in him, making peace between them by the blood of his cross;" and I apprehend that to be the true sense, and the only sense in which *things in heaven* can be said to be reconciled; for if it were to be granted, according to the assertion of Mr. Reynolds in the forecited place, that the *angels* received *confirming grace in Christ,* they could not upon that account be said to be *reconciled;* but when a breach commenced between man and the blessed God, the angels, as faithful subjects, must join with him against the rebellious creature, and be ready to act as enemies to him while he continued the enemy of God.

g *In the body of his flesh through death.*] Some have understood this as if it had been said, He hath now by his death reconciled you or incorporated you into the body of his church, which is to him as his own flesh. Compare Eph. ii. 16; v. 29. 30. But surely *the body of his flesh* most literally and naturally signifies that body of mortal flesh which he was pleased to assume that he might be capable of suffering.

hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

portant *hope of* a happy immortality, brought to us by *the* glorious *gospel; which ye have heard* [*and*] *which hath* not only been published among the Jews, but, by a special commission from God, *been preached to the whole creation under heaven*, as a message which extends to all the species of mankind; by which he commandeth all men every where to repent, and promises salvation to all who believe and obey. *Of which* gospel *I Paul am appointed a minister*, and esteem it my peculiar honour and happiness that I am so.

SECT. ii.

Col. I. 23.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us learn by this sublime discourse of our holy apostle how we are to conceive of our *Lord Jesus Christ*, to whose glory he so wisely and happily consecrated the labours of his pen and of his life; and while we commemorate that *blood* of his in which we have *redemption, even the remission of our sins*, let us bow to him as *the image of the invisible God, and the First-born of the whole creation.* And, whatever discoveries we may at any time receive, as to the display of Divine power, wisdom, and goodness, in the formation of the *visible* or *invisible* world, let us remember that *by Christ all things* in both *were created*, not excepting *thrones and dominions, principalities and powers.* The angels of God worship him, as *with* and *by* the Father, their great Original and Support, acknowledging with *Paul*, and with the whole catholic church, as taught by him, that *in Christ all things subsist.* Let us then, with the whole host of heaven, bow down before him, and *worship him that sits upon the throne and the Lamb.* Let us with all humility adore his condescension, in uniting us to himself in such dear and intimate bonds, and avowing himself *the Head of the church*, which he disdains not to call *his body*, though he be *the beginning of the creation of God*, as well as *the First-born from the dead*, and beyond comparison *pre-eminent in all.*

Ver. 14 15 16 18

Important indeed are the consequences of this his condescension! It is *by him* that *God is reconciled* to us, and dwells in us. It is the *blood of his cross* that hath *made peace* between *Jews and Gentiles*, between *heaven and earth.* Justly might the angels have forsaken this earth of ours, and have ascended to heaven, to enter their protest against sinful man, yea to seek a commission for executing vengeance upon the apostate creature. But now, *through Christ*, they are become our friends and our brethren. At his command they *minister unto the heirs of salvation*, and will con-

20

SECT. ii.

tinue their kind offices, till heaven gives the interview which earth denies, and lays a foundation for the endearments of an everlasting friendship.

Ver.
23 O that this reconciling gospel might be effectually *preached to every creature under heaven!* But to obtain its effect, it must subdue our hearts to *holiness.* To be still under the power of sin, to
21 go on in a course of *evil works*, is to continue the enmity with God, and all his holy and happy creatures. Let us see to it, that we thankfully accept the *reconciliation* which the gospel proposes.
22 Then shall we at length be *presented blameless, irreproachable and holy in his sight.*
23 As we hope for this end, let *nothing remove us from our stedfastness*, nor from that glorious *hope of the gospel* for which it is certain nothing can be an equivalent. May divine grace establish and confirm us in it, and make us victorious over every thing that might attempt to supplant our feet and *take away our crown!*

SECT. III.

The Apostle takes occasion from what he had before said of the excellency of Christ's person, and the riches of his redeeming grace, to express his own solicitude to fulfil his ministry among them in the most successful manner; and lays open his tender concern for the Colossians and other Christians in their neighbourhood, that they might be established in their adherence to the gospel. Col. I. 24, *to the end.* Chap. II. 1—7.

SECT. iii.

Colossians I. 24.

Col. I. 24.

NOW, my brethren, give me leave to tell you, that I am so far from repenting of the ministry in which I am engaged, on account of any difficulties it brings along with it, that on the contrary *I rejoice* even *in my sufferings for you, and* with great pleasure *fill up whatever is wanting of the afflictions of Christ*[a] in his members, by taking part of them *in my* own *flesh, for* the sake of *his body, which,* as I said before, *is*

Col. I. 24.

WHO now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake

a *Fill up whatever is wanting,* &c.] Nothing could be farther from the *apostle's* intention (as we may learn from the whole tenor of his writings) than to intimate that the *sufferings of Christ were imperfect,* as to that fulness of *atonement* which was necessary in order to the *justification* of believers. But he deeply retained in his mind the impression of that first lesson which he had from his Saviour's mouth, *viz.* that *he* was persecuted in his members (Acts ix. 4); he therefore considers it as the plan of Providence, that a certain *measure of sufferings* should be endured by this body, of which Christ was the Head; and he rejoices to think, that what *he* endured in *his own person* was congruous to that wise and gracious scheme.

b *Whom*

sake, which is the church:

is the church, so dear to him the common Head, and to every member vitally united to him. *Of which* church *I was made a minister*, to wait upon it, and serve it in every office of humble love, *according to the dispensation of God, which was given me in respect of you, that I might thoroughly* and faithfully *preach the* whole *word of God* in the gospel. [*Even*] *that* great *mystery, which was hid from* so many preceding *ages and generations, but is now manifested to his saints* of the Gentile nations as well as of Jewish extraction; *To whom God was* graciously *determined to make known what is the rich glory of this mystery;* to discover it, I say, even *among the Gentiles; which* rich display of Divine grace *is* all summed up in [*this*] one word, [*that*] *Christ* [*is*] *in you, the hope of* eternal *glory;* being formed by Divine grace in your hearts, he brings to you, who were once without hope, and without God in the world (Eph. ii. 12), the bright beamings of this blessed prospect, even a glorious and holy immortality.

SECT. iii.

Col. I. 25.

25 Whereof I am made a minister according to the dispensation of God, which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;

26 *Even* the mystery which hath been hid from ages, and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

26

27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory;

27

And this is the illustrious Saviour, *whom we*, in the midst of all opposition, still continue to *preach, admonishing every man, and instructing every man*, as the respective circumstances of particular persons require. And, in the management of this important ministry, we conduct ourselves *with all* the *wisdom* and discretion we can obtain, that no single soul may be lost by our means; but *that we may*, if possible, *present every man* in due time *perfect in Christ Jesus*, when he shall appear to make up his final account[b]. *To which* important [*purpose*] *I also labour* in the sphere allotted me with diligence and resolution, exerting myself to the utmost, and *striving* with an intenseness, like that of one who contends for a crown in your well-known Grecian games. Yet I arrogate nothing to myself herein, for all is carried on *according to his energy, which operates with power in me*, and supports me in the glorious contest, whereas otherwise I should sink, and become the derision of mine enemies.

28

28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:

29

29 Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

Nor is it without attending carefully to their

Chap. II. 1.

II. 1 For I would that

b *Whom we preach*, &c.] All this discourse centers in the great view of engaging the Colossians to adhere to Christianity; and it is pleasant to observe how *every verse*, and almost *every clause*, suggests more directly or obliquely some *strong argument* to that purpose.

c *What*

SECT. iii.

Col. II. 1.

their full import, that I have made use of those strong terms which you have now been reading, to express the manner in which I exert myself in the great trust committed to me. *For I earnestly wish you to know what a* vigorous *contention*[c] *I have* with a variety of antagonists, *for you, and those of Laodicea, and as many as have not seen my face in the flesh*[d]. For indeed my struggle for the gospel, while under this painful confinement, is animated, not merely by considerations of personal friendship, for those whom I particularly know and love, but by a most benevolent regard to the good of mankind in general, known or unknown, that they may receive and retain this glorious revelation, and have it delivered to them with all possible advantage: *That their hearts may be comforted* by the consolation of the Holy Spirit, and animated to every good resolution[e], *being knit together* and compacted *in* mutual Christian *love* to the whole body, *and* to Christ the great Head of it: and that being thus cemented, they may attain *the richest and most assured understanding*[f] of the gospel, and, being enlightened in the clear and heart-affecting knowledge of it, they may be awakened *to the* most courageous and grateful *acknowledgment of the* sublime and adorable *mystery of God, even of the Father and of Christ.* Most heartily do I wish, that, however it may be despised as foolishness by a vain world, they may steadily profess it, and live upon the blessings derived from

that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and *for* them at Laodicea, and *for* as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;

2 That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;

c *What a* vigorous *contention.*] The *original* words, ηλικον αγωνα, denote a kind of *agony* into which he was thrown. It grieved the *apostle* to think how incapable he was rendered of serving them otherwise than by his *letters* and his *prayers.* O that such language might inspire every *minister* who reads it with a desire to use his *liberty* to the best of purposes, and to exert himself as, under such *confinement,* he would wish he had done!

d *Have not seen my face in the flesh.*] Or, as it might be rendered, *seen me in person.* Hence some have inferred, that he had never seen Colosse or Laodicea; but Theodoret thinks he means, he had not only a conflict for *them,* but for *others* whom he had not so much as *seen.* Possibly he may intend to intimate, that he was not only concerned for those members of these *churches* whom he personally knew, but likewise for others to whom he was a perfect *stranger,* and who might have been converted after he left them. Yet I think this *epistle* contains no argument from whence it can certainly be inferred that he was personally acquainted with these Christians.

e *Be comforted.*] The original word παρακλησωσιν signifies not only to have *consolation* administered under affliction, but to be *exhorted* and *quickened, excited* and *animated,* and so recovered from indolence and irresolution, as well as dejection.

f *The richest and most assured understanding.*] Εις παντα πλουτον της πληροφοριας της συνεσεως. This is an extremely *emphatical phrase,* more agreeable to the Hebrew than the Greek idiom, and it is one of the many instances of that *strong* manner of speaking with which the writings of our *apostle* abound.

g *Treasures*

SECT. iii.

Col. II. 3.

3 In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

from it; Even from the gospel of the blessed Jesus, *in whom are hid all the* noblest and most desirable *treasures of wisdom and knowledge*, himself being the incarnate wisdom of God[g]. *And this I say* of the perfection of Christ and his gospel, *that no man may deceive you by* the *enticing discourses* of human philosophy, and draw you off from a becoming attachment to him. *For though I be absent* from you *in the flesh, yet in spirit I am with you*, and as my heart interests itself most tenderly in all your concerns, God is pleased, by the revelation of his Spirit, to give me a very particular view of your circumstances, so that the very sight of it could hardly be more distinct and affecting (1 Cor. v. 3) [*And*] indeed in your present situation, it gives me a great deal of pleasure, and *I am* continually *rejoicing*, *while I* thus *behold your* regular and beautiful *order, and the steadiness of your faith in Christ*, which your enemies are in vain endeavouring to shake. Be concerned *therefore*, as you desire to retain this faith, to act in a manner answerable to it: and *as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord*, to whom you have vowed a most faithful obedience, an obedience indeed to which he has the justest claim, [*so*] let it be your care to *walk in* all holy conformity and subjection to *him*; That it may appear you are deeply *rooted and* solidly *edified in him*, building all your hopes of pardon and salvation on him and his religion alone; *and confirmed in the* purity of his *faith, as ye have been taught* it, *abounding* more and more *in* the lively exercise of *it*, *with* the most cordial and cheerful *thanksgiving* to God, who has been pleased to call you to the participation of all the blessings which are inseparably connected with it.

4 And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.

5 For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ.

6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so* walk ye in him;

7 Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

IMPROVEMENT.

To bear sufferings with patience, has justly been reckoned an high attainment; and it was the boasted strength and glory of the *Pagan* philosophy to teach men to do it: a glory in which it was often

[g] *Treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*] Mr. *Howe* thinks that the word γνωσεως here has some oblique reference to the *gnostics*, or sect of the *knowing men*, as we might express it in English (Vol. II. page 226); but I see no evidence of their having prevailed so *early*.

SECT. iii.

often deficient, a strength which often failed them, who had the fairest opportunities of being proficients in their schools.

Ver. 24 But *Paul* had learnt by the philosophy of *Jesus* to *rejoice* in them, when considered as subservient to the honour of *Christ*, and to the good of his *church*, even of those members of it whom he had *never seen in the flesh*; rejoicing thereby to fulfil his embassy, and to *confirm* that important *word of God* which taught the *mystery concealed from* so many *ages and generations*. *And* what was that *mystery*, but the same that is so clearly revealed to us, even that 27 *Christ in us is the hope of glory?*

Chap. ii. 1.

Chap. i. 26

To *Gentile* sinners that were *without hope* is hope now preached; the hope not only of *felicity*, but *glory*. And this by *Christ*, not only as proclaimed amongst us, for to many that hear of his name, and of the scheme of salvation by him, he is a *stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence*, but by *Christ* as *in us*. Highly are they honoured, who have it in charge to *preach him*. May they learn from the *apostle* how it is to be done. It is to be at- 28 tended with practical *instructions* and *admonitions*, to be conducted with the greatest prudence and care, and to be addressed to *every man*, according to his respective character and circumstances in life; that so, if it be by any means possible to prevent it, none of those that are committed to their care and charge may be lost, but every man may at length be presented *perfect in Christ* in that day, when among all that truly belong to him, there shall be no remaining imperfections.

29 Surely this is a cause in which it is worth their while to *strive*. May the *strength of God work powerfully* in them for that purpose! Then will all our *hearts be comforted*, when we have attained to the *full assurance* of the truth of our religion, when we courageously *acknowledge* and maintain it, when we improve it to the great end for which it was preached to us, and, having professed to *receive Christ Jesus* as *our Lord*, make it our care in a suitable 6 manner to *walk in him*. For this purpose, let us endeavour to be 7 deeply *rooted and grounded in him*, *confirmed in the faith* as the *apostles* taught it; *giving thanks to God* for the instructions we receive in it, and numbering it, as we have great reason to do, among the choicest mercies we could receive, even from an *Omnipotent* hand, not only that we hear the sound of the gospel, but that we have felt its vital influence upon our hearts.

Chap. ii. 2.

SECT.

SECT. IV.

The Apostle largely cautions the Colossians against suffering their minds to be corrupted from the simplicity of Christianity, either by Pagan philosophy or Jewish tradition, representing to them how complete they were in Christ without the addition of either. Col. II. 8—19.

Col. II. 8.
BEWARE lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ;

COLOSSIANS II. 8.

SECT. iv.

Col. II. 8.

SEE to it therefore, my dear brethren, *that*, as you are under such strong engagements to abound in all the fruits of that gospel which you have been taught with so much advantage, *no man make a prey of you, by* pretended *philosophy and vain deceit* [a], *according to the tradition of men*, of which both Jews and Gentiles are so fond [b]: and *according to the elements of* that literature which are so much regarded in *the world* [c] by persons of different religious persuasions in it, *but* which are *not* by any means *according to Christ*, nor agreeable to the genius and simplicity of his gospel.

9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

For in him dwelleth all the fulness of Godhead bodily and substantially, so that his human nature is the temple of the Deity [d].

9

10 And ye are complete

And ye are complete in

10

a *Vain deceit.*] This may include any thing that would encourage a trust it was not able to support; and particularly may refer to *superstitous* rites and ceremonies, as well as unprofitable *speculations*. Different tempers lead to different excesses and errors on these heads.

b Of which both Jews and Gentiles are so fond.] Mr. Peirce thinks it is improbable that the Gentile philosophers should trouble themselves to dispute with Christians, or that they should admit any of their notions, to adulterate Christianity with them; and therefore that all the corruptions here referred to were brought in by Jewish leaders. But it appears from Philo and Josephus, that there was such an intercourse between the *philosophers* and the Jews, to give some *tincture* to their religious notions: so that I think it much more natural to suppose the *apostle* intended to guard them against both.

c *Elements of the world.* Mr. Peirce thinks στοιχεια signifies *shadows* as opposed to *substance*. Compare Gal. iv. 3, 9; Eph. iv. 14—16. Such the Jewish ceremonies undoubtedly were; but there may be a peculiar spirit in speaking of the boasted dictates of Pagan Philosophy, but as *elements* or lessons for children, when compared with the sublime instruction to be received in the school of Christ.

d *Dwelleth all the fulness*, &c.] I was unwilling to vary any thing from the common version of so important a text, without more certain reason than I could discern here; else I might perhaps have rendered it, *in whom the whole fulness of Deity substantially dwells*. It is plain that the *Godhead* is an *anglicism* equivalent to Deity. Compare xvii. 29. And I cannot think that these wonderful words are intended merely to signify, that God hath lodged in the hands of Christ a *fulness of gifts*, to be conferred upon men; as if the passage were merely parallel to Eph. iii. 19, and John i. 16, 17. as Mr. Peirce explains it; while Socinus sinks it yet lower, as if it only referred to his complete *knowledge* of the Divine will. I assuredly believe,

SECT. iv.

in him; happy enough in such a Master, and in such a Saviour, who is able to fill you with all knowledge, grace, and glory, without any such additions to his religion as human philosophy or superstition would make; even in him, *who is the Head of all principality and power,* from whom the angelic world, and creatures of the most exalted rank and dignity in it, to whom some would direct your devotions, derive their light and holiness, their honour and felicity.

Col. ii. 10.

plete in him, which is the Head of all principality and power.

11 Let me therefore exhort you most steadily to adhere to this glorious Redeemer, *in whom* I may say, *ye also are circumcised, with the circumcision not performed with hands,* according to Jewish rites, but with another kind of circumcision, far more noble and excellent, which that was intended symbolically to express, even *by the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh,* renouncing all the deeds of it. Your engagements to this you have expressed *by* that ordinance which I may call *the circumcision of Christ*; it being that by which he hath appointed that we should be initiated into his church, as the members of it formerly were by circum-

11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ:

12 cision. And to this new and more gentle rite you have conformed yourselves, *being buried with him in baptism*[e], to express your desire of dying to sin, as he died for it; *in which* ordinance *also ye were* represented as *raised with him,* and in consequence thereof animated to all newness of life, *by* the *belief* you then professed *in* [*that*] wonderful display of the *energy of God*[f] *who*

12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God who

believe, that, as it contains an evident allusion to the Shechinah in which God dwelt, so it ultimately refers to the adorable *mystery* of the union of the *Divine* and *human* natures, in the Person of the glorious Emanuel, which makes him such an object of our hope and confidence, as the most exalted creature with the most glorious endowments, could never *of himself* be.

e *Buried with him in baptism.*] For the import of this phrase, and the validity of some *arguments* often drawn from it, see Rom. vi. 4, Vol. VIII. p. 434, note d. Dr. Gale pleads, that as this church at Colosse was planted earlier than that at Rome, and this *epistle* was written later than that to the Romans, it more abundantly confirms the perpetuity of *baptism,* as it supposes all to whom it was addressed to have been partakers of that ordinance, whether they were or were not descended from Christian parents. *Gale's Serm.* Vol. II. No. 7, p. 202, 203.

f *Belief in* [*that*] *energy of God,* &c.] Whatever evidence there may be from other scriptures, to prove that *faith* is the effect of a *Divine operation* on the mind, of which I am fully persuaded (compare Eph. ii. 8. and note there,) I think the genius of the Greek language affords an argument which they, who understand it, must feel on reading this *passage,* to prove that it is not the sense of this text, διὰ πιστεως της ενεργειας. Thus πιστις αληθειας is *belief of the truth,* 2 Thess. ii. 13, 15, and πιστις του Κυριου, *the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ,* or believing on him, James ii. 1. Compare Phil. i. 27, where πιστις του ευαγγελιου is *believing the gospel.*

g *Having*

who hath raised him from the dead.

who raised him from the dead, and thereby confirmed his doctrine in general, and in particular confirmed our hopes of a glorious resurrection and immortality, if we continue in a faithful adherence to him.

SECT. iv.

Col. II. 12.

13 And you being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.

And you, Gentiles, *who were* once *dead in* a course of notorious *trespasses, and in the uncircumcision of your flesh,* abandoned to all its sensual and irregular inclinations, *hath he* also *quickened together with him,* making his death and resurrection the means of spiritual life to you; *having freely forgiven all your offences,* and condescended graciously to take you into covenant with himself: And this upon a more easy and agreeable footing than Israel before stood; *having blotted out, with respect to us, the hand-writing of* Jewish *ordinances* and institutions [g], *which was contrary to us,* Acts xv. 10; and had an evident efficacy, either to load us with an heavy burden, or to alienate the hearts of our Jewish brethren from us. *And* therefore he *hath taken it away* from between us, as I may so express it, *nailing it to* [*his*] *cross,* and thereby has cancelled it, as bonds are cancelled by being struck through with a nail; while he has accomplished the purposes of the ceremonial law, by that sacrifice of himself, and thereby caused the obligation of it to cease. By that important transaction he hath also made us victorious over all our spiritual enemies, and especially the formidable spirit of darkness; *having spoiled* these *principalities and powers* [h] of the

13

14 Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross:

14

15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing

15

g *Having blotted out, &c.*] I have given what appeared the most easy, natural, and comprehensive sense. Mr. Peirce says, the word χειρογραφον, rendered *hand-writing,* signifies a sort of a note under a man's hand, whereby he obliges himself to the payment of any debt. The Jews bound themselves to God, by their profession of Judaism, not to worship any other Deity, nor to neglect any Divine institution; in consequence of which they rejected all communion with the Gentiles; and thus it was *against them.* The word δογμα has been found to signify a royal *mandate* or *decree,* which shews it refers to the Mosaic law.

h *Having spoiled principalities and powers.*] It is generally known that Mr. Peirce, in his interpretation of this *text,* gives it a very singular turn; as if the sense were, "That God hath divested the good *angels* of that authority which they had in the world before the incarnation of Christ, and caused them to attend his triumph when he ascended into heaven, and publickly proposed them as an example (εδειγματισεν) of cheerful and acceptable obedience to him." And it is pleaded, with considerable plausibility, that θριαμβευω is used in that sense, 2 Cor. ii. 14. This he thinks suits the connection, as this *spoiling principalities and powers,* is ascribed *to God,* and as it is introduced as an argument against *worshipping angels.* But it is certain, that *principalities and powers,* may indifferently signify *good or bad angels.* Compare Eph. vi. 12. God hath undoubtedly *triumphed in the triumph* of his Son, and the sense which Mr. Peirce takes the word εδειγματισεν is a very unusual one. Dr. Whitby observes, that Cerinthus and Simon Magus, whose doctrines he imagines the apostle is opposing in this part of his epistle, pretended to deliver men from the power of *evil spirits,* by whom they said the world was made and governed.

i *Sabbaths.*]

SECT. iv.

Col. II. 15.

the trophies which they had gained, by drawing us into the grand original apostacy, and subjecting to themselves this part of God's rational creation; *he hath made them an open spectacle* to the whole world, *triumphing over them by it*, even by that cross whereby they hoped to have triumphed over him. But God turned their counsels against themselves, and ruined their empire by that death of his Son which they had been so eager to accomplish.

triumphing over them in it.

16 Since *therefore* the ceremonial law is now abolished, *let not any*, who is in a bigotted manner attached to it, *judge* and condemn any of *you* Gentile Christians, *in* regard to the use of *meat or drink* forbidden by it, *or in respect to a feast* which is appointed, *or to a new-moon or sabbaths* [i]; ordained as times of sacred rest and solemn worship, according to that ritual, but not therefore by any consequence holy to us.

16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*:

17 *Which things are* indeed, in their original design and constitution, only *a shadow of* good *things to come*, intended to lead the mind to spiritual and evangelical blessings: *but the body* and substance of them [*is*] given us in the gospel *of Christ*, in whom they all center, and having the latter, we need not be solicitous about the former.

17 Which are a shadow of things to come: but the body *is* of Christ.

18 *Let no one*, therefore, *who may* ever so eagerly *desire it*, or ever so artfully attempt it, *deprive you of your* great *prize* [k], for which as Christians you contend, *by* [*an affected*] *humility, and the worship of angels* (which some Jewish zealots, as well as heathen philosophers, so eagerly inculcate [l] *intruding* officiously and presumptuously *into*

18 Let no man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility, and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which

i *Sabbaths.*] Mr. Baxter observes, with his usual spirit, that we may well wonder at those good men that can find the prohibition of a *form of prayer*, or a written sermon in the *second commandment*, and yet cannot find the *abrogation* of the *Jewish law*, relating to the sabbath, in these plain words of the *apostle*. For it is certainly most arbitrary to pretend, that these words do not include *a weekly sabbath*, when there was no other solemnity so *generally* signified by that name, though the use of the *plural* number shews that *all* days of *sacred rest* appointed by Moses were to be taken in.

k *Let no man deprive you, &c.*] The original is, Μηδεις υμας καταβραβευετω θελων εν ταπεινοφροσυνη, &c. I suppose θελων to signify a *desire* of any to impose upon them, but Sir Norton Knatchbull connects it with the words immediately following, and renders the whole, "*Let no man deceive you with fallacious arguments, who is delighted with humility and the worship of angels.*" The word ταπεινοφροσυνη undoubtedly signifies *humility* in general, but, as the connection determines it to signify what was *affected* and at best *fantastic*, if not *counterfeit*, I have added a word in the *version*.

l *Worship of angels.*] It evidently appears from several passages in *Philo* to have been the opinion of that learned Jew, that *angels* were messengers who presented our prayers to God, as well as brought down his favours to us. He represents this

which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind;

into that which he hath not seen; while they pretend to tell us wonderful secrets, relating to their various ranks, subordinations, and offices. This may render a man the admiration of the ignorant and inconsiderate, but it is indeed the result of his being *vainly puffed up by his* corrupt and *fleshly mind*, with the conceit of things which it is impossible he should understand, and a desire of introducing novelties into religion. SECT. iv. Col. II. 18.

19 And not holding the head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

And so men wander themselves, and mislead others, in consequence of their *not holding* and properly adhering to him whom I mentioned above as *the Head*, even the Lord Jesus Christ; *from whom the whole body* of the church *being supplied, and compacted by* the union of various *joints and bands, increases in* grace and holiness continually, and at length attaineth to *the increase of God;* to whom therefore I most earnestly exhort you, my brethren, continually and stedfastly to adhere. 19

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us contemplate, with daily pleasure, the glorious effects of the death of our blessed Redeemer, by which the *Mosaic law* was *abolished*, the *hand-writing of ordinances blotted out;* that death, by which so glorious a victory over our spiritual enemies was obtained, by which the infernal *principalities and powers* were stripped of their trophies, and themselves exposed as an *open spectacle*. Let us improve this victory to all the glorious purposes for which it was intended. Let us above all consider it as an engagement to a life of exemplary holiness, especially as we are ourselves *circumcised with the circumcision of Christ;* as by *baptism* we are solemnly engaged to mortify all irregular affections, and, being *buried with Christ* in that solemn rite, to *rise to* all *newness of life*, having received the *forgiveness of our sins*, and being *raised with Christ* to the hope of eternal glory. Ver. 14 15 11 12 13

Let

this view of the matter as most *humble* and reverential, and there is no doubt but it prevailed among other Jews (compare Tob. xi. 14; xii. 12, 15); and that the *apostle* refers to this, seems much more probable than the interpretation of Tertullian, who would explain it of *worship taught by angels*, or persons pretending to receive revelations from them. Whether the heathen began so early as this to call those celestial spirits *angels* whom they had formerly called *good demons*, I do not certainly know; but it is evident, that very soon after the *apostles* days they speak of *angels* and *archangels*, and recommend the worship of them under those names. See *Jamblic. de Myst.* sect. ii. cap. 2, 3. It is justly remarked by Bishop *Burnet*, that had it been the *apostle's* intention to give the least encouragement to any religious addresses to *saints* and *angels*, this would have been a very natural occasion of introducing the subject, and adjusting its proper boundaries. *Burnet on the Art.* p. 225.

a *If*

SECT. iv.

Let us be solicitous ever to maintain the strictest union with *Christ* as *our Head*, remembering how great an honour it is to be
Ver. thus related to him, *in whom dwelleth all the fulness of Godhead*
9 *bodily*. Let us be careful, in virtue of this union, to live in the
19 communion of Christian love, with all the members of the body, and ourselves to grow with all *the increase of God*.

8 And let us guard against all those *human* traditions, or refine-
16, 17 ments of *philosophical* speculation, which are disagreeable to these *elements of Christ* into which we have been initiated; and against every thing which could be an infringement of that liberty which *Christ* hath granted to his church, and which it is our duty to endeavour to maintain, against all encroachments; even though they should be made by any in *his* name, and under the pretence
18 of authority from *him*. It may be urged upon us as *humility*, to submit to such *impositions*, but it is the *truest* humility to maintain an exact obedience to the authority of our Divine Master, and to *limit* even our submission to those of our brethren whom we may most honour and love, by a regard to *his* command and institution. And if a due care is not taken in this respect, we may be *deprived*, at least in some degree, *of our prize*, by the methods whereby some may endeavour to persuade us that we shall most effectually
8 *secure* it. May Divine wisdom preserve us from all those *vain deceits* whereby our *faith* might be corrupted, or our conformity to the plan of *Christian* institutions be rendered, in any respect, less beautiful, pure, and complete.

SECT. V.

The Apostle further cautions the Colossians against those corrupt additions to Christianity which some were attempting to introduce, especially by rigours and superstitions of their own devising; and exhorts them, as the properest method for their security, to be endeavouring to raise their hearts more to Christ, as their ascended Lord and life. Col. II. 20, *to the end.* Chap. III. 1—4.

COLOSSIANS II. 20.

SECT. v.

I HAVE mentioned the relation in which you stand to Christ as your Head, and I must from
Col. II. 20. hence take occasion farther to plead the obligations you are under to labour after a growing conformity to him in all things. *If therefore ye* are indeed (as by baptism ye profess to *be (dead with Christ*[a], *from the elements* and rudiments *of*

COL. II. 20.

WHEREFORE, if ye be dead with Christ, from the rudiments

[a] *If therefore ye be dead with Christ, &c.*] Some have considered this as the beginning of a new paragraph, addressed to Jewish zealots among them; and plead, in support

ments of the world; why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,

of the world, from those things which among the Gentiles or the Jews men are apt to build so much upon, *why, as if ye were* still *living* as before *in the world*, and stood in that respect on an equal footing with others, *do ye meddle with these appointments*, subjecting yourselves to them; yea, and are ready yourselves to insist on the observation of them, and even to join in imposing them upon others. And particularly those which the Mosaic law inculcates, such as, *touch not* any thing ceremonially unclean, *taste not* any food which that prohibits, *handle not* any thing by which such pollution might be contracted [b]. *All which things tend to* the *corruption* of that excellent religion into which you have the honour to be initiated; *by the abuse* of them, *according to the commandments and doctrines of* mistaken and ill-designing *men*, who insist so eagerly upon them, as if they were essential to salvation; though, as I observed before, they have answered their great end, so far as they were of Divine institution, and are now laid aside by the same authority that introduced them, so that all obligation upon the conscience is ceased. Concerning *which things* we may in the general observe, that they *have indeed a pretence of wisdom*, and are in that view gravely insisted upon, especially by the more rigorous sects; but many of them are of such a nature, that even while that Jewish œconomy continued in force, they made no genuine part of it, but rather taught men to pervert religion, by making it to consist *in will-worship*, which they themselves devised, *and*, in an affected *humility* of address, *and in a severity to the body*; which, rigorous as it seemed, was far from being true mortification, or disposing the mind to it. On the contrary, while it puffed men up with a vain conceit of their own sanctity, it might be said rather to tend *to the dishonourable satisfying of the*

SECT. V.

Col. II. 20.

21 (Touch not, taste not, handle not:

21

22 Which are all to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of of men?

22

23 Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will-worship and humility, and neglecting of the body, not

23

support of this opinion, that the *subjection to ordinances* which the *apostle* here reproves, is inconsistent with the applauses he had before bestowed on the Colossians. But it seems most natural to suppose that he addresses the society in general, and leaves it to their own consciences to determine which of them deserved the censure.

b *Touch not, taste not, handle not.*] It has been observed, that the quick succession of these precepts, without any *copulatives* between, happily expresses the *eagerness* with which the seducing teachers inculcated these things. Dr. Whitby shews, that Cerinthus's doctrine and precepts had much of this cast, and some of his quotations are remarkable in this view.

c *Dis-*

SECT. V.

the flesh[c], while it seemed most to afflict it: for that self-complacency, ostentation, and contempt of others, with which these severities are often attended, is indeed a carnal principle; nor could the grossest sensualities be more contrary to the will of God and the genius of true religion.

Col. II. 23.

not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

III. 1 And let me farther improve the great principle I have laid down, and urge, that *since ye are risen with Christ*, ye should *therefore seek things that are above*[d] the sphere of this mortal and animal life; even there *where Christ is sitting* in dignity and felicity *at the right hand of God.*

III. 1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

2 Yes, my brethren, charge it continually on your consciences, that ye *mind*, prefer, affect, and pursue *the things that are above*, and *not those* [*that are*] here *on* this low *earth.* And this attachment to the great and glorious views of the invisible and eternal world, will moderate your regards to many other things about which

2 Set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth.

3 you are ready to be so much engaged. And surely this may reasonably be expected, *for ye are* by solemn profession, as I pleaded before, *dead* with Christ, *and your* new and better *life* flows from him, and *is*, as it were, *hidden with Christ in God*[e]. A regard to an unseen Saviour is the great principle that animates it, and it centers on that blessed world where he reigns, and

3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

c *Dishonourable satisfying of the flesh.*] Ουκ εν τιμη τινι προς πλησμονην της σαρκος. I suppose the two *clauses* may be transposed, as it had been said, It is to such a satisfying of the flesh as does it *no real honour*; which I take to be a *meiosis*, to express what is *dishonourable*; whereas the highest *honour* of our bodies is to be the *instruments of our souls* in the service of God. Mr. *Howe* observes, that τιμη signifies *provision*, as well as *honour*, and thinks the sense to be, that though there was no appearance of *providing* for the flesh, yet there was a *carnal* kind of satisfaction in these *affected* severities, when proceeding from the principles of vain-glory and ill-nature, which were as contrary to the genius of true religion as any of the grossest sensualities that could be imagined. *Howe's Works*, Vol. I. p. 375. And this is certainly the true sense in the general, though this explication of τιμη should be disputed. The Prussian Testament renders it, "Which things have indeed some appearance of wisdom, in that they are a voluntary worship, that they have an air of humility, that they spare not the body, and that they have no regard to the satiating the flesh:" which reads roundly, but gives a most unauthorised sense to ουκ εν τιμη τινι, and exchanges the spirit of the concluding words for a flat *tautology*.

d *Things that are above.*] Calvin understands this of the *sublimer parts of Christianity*, as opposed to Jewish ceremonies and *rudiments of the world*, mentioned chap. ii. 20; but it cannot properly be said that these are *with Christ in heaven.* I think therefore the *apostle* proceeds on the principles he had laid down, to graft a most important *practical exhortation*, different from any he had advanced before (as he certainly does, ver. 5), yet nothing could more effectually tend to take them off from those bigotted attachments of which he was solicitous to cure them. A remarkable instance of that happy *address* which we have so often had opportunity of observing, and which an *attentive reader* will observe in many other places, where we have not had room to point it out.

e *Your life is hid*, &c.] The *life* of the Christian is here represented as an invaluable *jewel*, and under a double *security* reserved *in heaven*, and laid up *with Christ in God*; secure therefore as the abode of Christ with the Father, or as the fidelity and immutability of the Father himself could make it.

and where God displays the brightest tokens of his majestic and gracious presence. And you have this farther transporting assurance, that *when Christ* [*who is*] the great Spring of *our* celestial *life*, and highest Object of our desire, *shall appear* in all the pomp and splendor of his final triumph, *then you shall also appear with him in glory*, making a part of that one bright and illustrious assembly which he shall then redeem from the power of the grave, and form to a perfection of soul, and lustre of body, suitable to the relation in which they all stand to him as the great Conqueror of death and hell, and Sovereign of universal nature. Let us therefore contentedly wait for our supreme felicity till that glorious day shall come.

SECT. V.

Col. III. 4.

4 When Christ, *who is* our life, shall appear, then shall all ye also appear with him in glory.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us charge it on our hearts, by all our great and solemn obligations to *Jesus*, our beloved Saviour and glorified Head, that we study the nature of true religion with greater care, and practise it with greater constancy. Let us not place it in a zeal for *ceremonial* observances, *according to the doctrines and commandments of men.* Let us ever remember that *Christ alone* is the Lawgiver of his church, and let us solicitously guard against the *abuses* in religion which would be the consequence of *introducing*, and much more of *imposing*, *human* ordinances. Too sensibly has the *church* in all ages seen and felt the unhappy effects of such a temper. Its *divisions*, and its *formality*, may in a great measure be traced up to this source. *Will-worship* and a *voluntary humility* have proved its disgrace, and in some countries almost its ruin. Let us labour after sublimer views, and considering ourselves as *risen with Christ*, let us *seek the things that are above.* Let us cultivate greater spirituality of mind, and endeavour to have our hearts there where our Lord is.

Ver. 20, 22 23 Chap. iii. 1

Surely the reflection upon that relation in which we stand to him, in concurrence with that glory in which he is now enthroned, the kind designs he still bears to us, and the prospect we have of *sitting down with him* ere long *in that kingdom*, may well *raise our thoughts* thither, and bear us above all immoderate attachment to these low scenes of mortal life. 2

Let us therefore study more and more the *hidden life of the Christian:* and, considering *Christ* as our *life*, be often anticipating in our thoughts the great day of his *appearance*, and dwelling on the blessed hope of *appearing with him in glory.* But, O! how 3 4

SECT. V. dark are our views of these things! How little do we feel of the sanctifying and elevating influence of this hope! Let us earnestly pray for a more abundant communication of Divine grace, that, deriving more and more of this spiritual life from *Christ*, we may have more suitable and affectionate apprehensions of that *angelic life* to which his love has destined us, and to which such a temper tends directly to lead us.

SECT. VI.

The Apostle presses the Colossians to guard against every degree of uncleanness, malice, and falsehood, and to abound in the practice of the opposite virtues, and in those devout exercises and evangelical views by which they might be animated to cultivate them. Col. III. 5—17.

COLOSSIANS III. 5.

SECT. VI. YOU have heard of the glorious hope which we entertain as Christians, let me *therefore* urge it upon you, that you be influenced in a Col. III. 5. suitable manner by it, and particularly that it engage you to *mortify* those lusts which are so apt to dwell in *your members that are on earth;* such as *fornication, uncleanness*, and every other kind and degree of *inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and an insatiable desire* of any carnal gratification, an object *which is* indeed nothing less than *idolatry*, or paying that regard to the most unworthy things which is due to God
6 alone. *On account of which the wrath of God is coming*, not only on those who profess themselves his people, but even *on the children of disobedience*, on heathens themselves, who bid the most open defiance to what we well know to be
7 the first principles of true religion. *Among whom ye also once walked*, and had your conversation, partaking with your neighbours in all their enormities, *when* formerly *ye lived among*
8 *them*, and made a part of their number. *But now* being converted to the pure, peaceful, and devout religion of the Lord Jesus Christ, see to it, that *ye also put away all these* enormities, and particularly the transports of open *rage*, the secret grudgings of concealed *resentment*, the malignant working of *malice*, the injuries of *evil-speaking*[a], the scandals of *lewd conversation;*

COL. III. 5.
MORTIFY therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness; inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

6 For which things sake, the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience.

7 In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.

8 But now you also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy,

a *Evil-speaking.*] The original word properly signifies *blasphemy*, but it includes not only *impious* speeches with regard to God, which is the highest degree of malignant

my, filthy communication out of your mouth.

9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;

10 And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him;

11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond *nor* free; but Christ *is* all, and in all.

12 Put on therefore (as

tion[b]; and let them all be resolutely banished *out of your mouth*, and out of your heart: *Neither lie one to another*, either in trade or common conversation; *having* solemnly professed to *put off the old man with his* iniquitous *deeds*, and entirely renounced all those corrupt affections which were naturally so prevalent in you; *And having* declared it as your design and resolution, to *put on the new* [*man*], all the branches of that contrary temper and disposition, which constitute the Christian character, and *which is renewed in knowledge* of our true duty and interest, and an universal holiness, as the genuine fruit of it; *according to the image of him that created him*, even of God, who is himself the great Standard of all moral perfection. Thus you will indeed become genuine members of that blessed society *where there is* no distinction between men of different nations, education, or ranks in life; where *neither* is any man rejected for being a *Greek*, *nor* accepted merely for being a *Jew*; a society where he can claim nothing by virtue of *circumcision*, *nor* lose any thing by *uncircumcision*; where no *Barbarian*, or even *Scythian*, is treated with contempt for that want of learning and politeness which is to be found in the most remote nation; or any *slave* trampled upon as unworthy notice, since he shares with others in the possession of that inestimable treasure, an immortal soul, and may have a part in the great Redeemer of souls: [*nor*] is a *freeman* chiefly esteemed or regarded upon account of his boasted liberty; *but* rather in proportion to his subjection to our Divine Master: for this is the great band of union among them all, the matter of their boasting and their joy, that they are related to *Christ*, who is acknowledged to be *all* that is amiable and excellent, *and* who dwells *in all* true believers, without any difference on any of these accounts.

Consider this, my brethren, whatever your external

SECT. vi.

Col. III. 9.

10

11

12

nant language, but all *railing* and *reproachful* speeches against our *brethren*, proceeding from the transports of furious passions.

b *Lewd conversation.*] So I understand αισχρολογια; of *obscene* and *impure words*, which are so scandalously common (if I may credit reports which I cannot suspect) among many, whom *good breeding* at least should teach better, if they had no regard to any *higher* consideration. But Dr. Whitby explains it of *reproachful speeches* that expose others to contempt; which to me seems a very unnatural interpretation.

c *Put*

SECT. VI.

external circumstances may be, and *put on therefore, as the chosen* people *of God*[c], *holy* to him, *and beloved* by him, set apart to his service, and
Col. III. 12. blessed with the tokens of his peculiar favour, *bowels of tender mercy* to all the afflicted and distressed, *gentleness* to all men, *lowliness of mind*, engaging you to condescend even to those in the humblest stations, *meekness* under whatever injuries and provocations ye may receive, and *long-suffering*, when your trials may be in their continuance tedious, as well as violent in their de-
13 gree; *Forbearing* to break out into any revengeful actions, or reproachful speeches against *one another, and* not only so, but cordially *forgiving one another, if any have a quarrel against another: even as Christ hath freely forgiven you*, though you have in so many instances injured and provoked him, *so also* do *ye*, in imitation of
14 an example so amiable and so Divine. *And above all these things*, [*put on*] *love, which is* indeed *the* very *bond of* all *perfection*, and which will keep your minds stedfast, and establish that consistency of sentiments and behaviour which is so honourable in the Christian character, and
15 tends so much to its security. *And let the peace of God* always *preside* as the great umpire *in your hearts*[d], even that placid and benign temper which so naturally results from a sense of your reconciliation to God. This is the blessed state and disposition *into which you also are called* by the gospel, being happily united *in one body: and be ye thankful* for those privileges which result from it, whatever affliction may for the
16 present be allotted to you. And *let the word of Christ*, the gospel which you have received, *dwell in you richly in all wisdom;* lay it up in your hearts, meditate upon it continually, and endeavour wisely to improve it to the best purpose. And, in this view, be often *teaching* one another the doctrines of Christianity, *and admonishing*

(as the elect of God, holy and beloved), bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering;

13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also *do* ye.

14 And above all these things, *put on* charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing

c *Put on as the chosen of God.*] This is not inconsistent with what was said above (ver. 10), of *their having* already *put on the new man*, as the *apostle* intended here to exhort them to advance more and more in these benevolent dispositions, which did in some considerable degree already prevail in their hearts.

d *Let the peace of God preside in your hearts.*] The original word, which we render *preside*, is βραβευέτω. Let it fill your hearts, says Pasor, with such a joy as *victors* have when they receive τὸ βραβεῖον, *the prize*, in the Olympic games. I rather think it signifies, let it *preside* in your minds, as the *master of the games* does in those solemnities. And, as this is the sense in which I long ago apprehended the word was to be taken, it is a great satisfaction to me to find this *interpretation* confirmed by the authority of so great a *critic* as Beza.

e *Psalms,*

nishing one another, in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

nishing one another concerning the duties of it, and let these seasons, whether of public worship, or private conference, be in a proper manner diversified *with* the use of David's *psalms, and* other evangelical *hymns and spiritual songs* [e], which under the influences of the Spirit ye may be enabled to compose. For it will be both pleasant and profitable to be frequently employed in *singing* such pieces of sacred poetry and music, provided it to be not merely the language of the lip, or the exercise of the voice, but be likewise attended *with* the exercise of *grace in your heart;* which surely it will be, if we rightly consider that they are addressed *to the Lord,* to whom every sentiment of the heart is known, and to whom nothing can be acceptable which is not attended with cordial devotion. *And,* upon this great principle, you may take it as a general rule, that *whatsoever ye do in word, or in deed,* in all your discourses, and in all your actions, you [*do*] *all* things *in the name of the Lord Jesus* Christ; all to the purposes of his glory, and all in humble dependence upon him, both for the communication of spiritual strength, and for your acceptance with God. And, while you have so dear and acceptable a name to use in your approaches to the Divine Majesty, rejoice in this inestimable privilege; perform the duties incumbent upon you with pleasure, and be continually *giving thanks to God even the Father through him,* who will graciously recommend, by his prevailing intercession, your prayers and praises, as well as your other services, to the Divine regard.

SECT. vi.

Col. III. 16.

17 And whatsoever ye do in word, or deed *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

17

IMPROVE-

e *Psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs.*] Calvin thinks all these words refer to David's poetical pieces, as some of them are called מזמרים, *Mizmarim psalms*, attended with instruments, some תהלים, *Tehillim*, which he thinks were *prayers* generally sung, and others שורים, *Shurim songs*, containing not only proper and immediate acts of devotion addressed to God, but also *moral* and *religious instructions*. But I see not the authority of this interpretation, and think it much more reasonable to believe, that by *hymns and spiritual songs* he means such poetical composures as, under the influence of the *Spirit*, were written or uttered. For it would be very absurd to suppose, that when there was such a *gift* in the church, as we are sure there was, (compare 1 Cor. xiv. 15. 26.) they should be confined to the words of David in all their devotions of this kind. And it would certainly be as reasonable for us, in these later ages, to explode all kind of *prayers* in public, but *liturgies* collected from the *words* of scripture, as all *sacred songs* in Divine worship but literal translations from what is called *the book of Psalms*. Numberless passages of the *Old* and *New Testament* are equally capable of furnishing us with sacred *anthems*.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. vi.

LET Christians solemnly charge upon themselves an abstinence from those vices which bring the *wrath of God upon heathens;* and though it should be like wounding or cutting off our *members*, let us put on an holy resolution to *mortify them;* and, not content with refraining from all degrees of pollution, falsehood and malignity of heart, let us be more solicitous *to put on the new man*, which is the *creation of God* in the soul, and which bears his amiable *image*. Whatever our nation or rank, our education or our circumstances in life may be, let this be our concern, that we may be *in Christ, and Christ in us*, for on that depends our everlasting *all*. Happy the most untaught *savage*, and the most oppressed *slave*, who is thus related to the incarnate *wisdom of God*, and the great Lord of all, infinitely beyond the politest *Greek*, the most ceremonious *Jew*, the freest *subject*, or the most despotic *prince*, who is a stranger to such a blessing!

Ver. 5, 6 8, 9 10 11

If we have any reason to hope that we are *the elect of God, holy and beloved by him*, let this charm us to entertain the most beneficent sentiments and views with regard to our fellow-creatures, and *teach us to put on bowels of mercy, gentleness, humility, meekness, and long-suffering*. Let the grace of *Christ in freely forgiving us*, teach us to rejoice in opportunities of imitating it. Do we desire to feel the *peace of God presiding* in us, let us exercise *charity the bond of perfectness*, and let us study to be more and more *thankful*, in whatever stations we are placed; observing attentively its advantageous circumstances, reflecting especially how much *worse* things might have been, and how *unworthy* we ourselves are of any distinction which God may be pleased to make in our favour.

12 13 14, 15

We have especially great reason most thankfully to acknowledge the Divine goodness, in providing us with so many religious advantages, and particularly with those that relate to the most decent and edifying performance of the duty of *psalmody*. To furnish us for a right discharge of it, let us carefully *treasure up the word of Christ in our minds*, and let us be ever more solicitous to preserve the melody *of the heart than that of the voice*. In this, and in every other service, let all be done *in the name of Christ*, and then we may humbly hope that all shall be accepted through him. And, if that prevailing name do not recommend us to acceptance, the divine purity will find something in every one of them which will justify God, not only in rejecting *them*, but in condemning *us*.

16 17

SECT.

SECT. VII.

The Apostle recommends to the Colossians a care in performing the duties that answered to the several relations of life in which they stood, whether they were wives or husbands, children or parents, servants or masters Col. III. 18, *to the end.* IV. 1—6.

Col. III. 18. WIVES, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.

Colossians III. 18.

LET me now remind you, as I frequently do my other Christian friends, both in my sermons and epistles, of how great importance it is to endeavour after such a temper and behaviour, in respect to the relative duties of life, as may adorn a Christian profession. And be particularly exhorted, ye *wives*, that ye *be subject to your own husbands*, though they should be Jews or heathens, *as it is becoming in the Lord:* for a modest, respectful, obedient behaviour in this most endearing relation, will make your characters appear beautiful, and so far gain upon those of them who are strangers to Christianity, as to give them a good opinion of it upon that account. And, on the other hand, ye *husbands*, be exhorted tenderly to *love* [*your*] *wives, and be not* severe and *bitter against them*, as too many in the world are, who become domestic tyrants, and quarrel with their wives upon every trifling occasion; thus overbearing those whom they should rather guard and comfort, breaking their tender spirits, and perhaps shortening their days.

sect. vii. Col. III. 18.

19 Husbands, love *your* wives, and be not bitter against them.

19

20 Children, obey *your* parents in all things: for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord.

Children, see to it that ye *be obedient to* [*your own*] *parents in all* lawful *things; for this is well-pleasing to the Lord* Jesus Christ himself, who, when he condescended to dwell in human flesh, was a constant example of filial piety, not only to his real mother, but to him who was only his supposed father. (Luke xi. 51.) And ye *fathers*, see to it, that you *do not* so abuse the superiority of the relation as, by a perverse and excessively severe conduct, to *provoke your children* [*to wrath*] *lest they be discouraged* from attempting to please you, when it shall seem to be an impossible task; and be rendered unfit to pass through the world with advantage, when their spirits have been so unreasonably broken under an oppressive yoke in the earliest years of life.

20

21 Fathers, provoke not your children *to anger*, lest they be discouraged.

21

Ye

SECT. VII.

Col. III. 22.

Ye *servants, be subject in all things*, so far as duty will permit, *to* [*them that are*] *with respect to the flesh* [*your*] *masters*, and whose property Divine Providence has suffered you to become: obey their commands, and take care of their interest, *not* merely *with eye-service, as* those who are solicitous only to be *men-pleasers but* as *in the simplicity of* your *heart, fearing God*, and therefore for his sake attending to the offices of that humble station he has been pleased to assign you; as those who remember that his authority enforces that of your earthly masters. *And whatsoever work ye are employed in, pursue it heartily* and diligently, *as* therein paying a tribute of love and duty *to the Lord* Jesus Christ himself, *and not to men* alone. *Knowing* that, in this case, your diligence in your secular calling shall be accepted, with regard to the principle from whence it proceeds, and *that you shall receive from the Lord* Jesus Christ *the* gracious *recompense*; not indeed an estate in this world, like that which your masters may value themselves upon, but, what is infinitely more important, the possession *of an* eternal *inheritance* above. *For ye* herein *serve the Lord Christ*, whose rewards are according to his own majesty, grace, and power, and not according to the meanness of our deserts. *And*, on the other hand, *he that is injurious* to any, in one relation of life or another, *shall receive according to the injury that he hath done, and there is no respect of persons* with God. Nor shall a Christian servant be excused because it is an heathen master he hath injured.

22 Servants, obey in all things *your* masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God;

23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men:

24 Knowing, that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ:

25 But he that doeth wrong, shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.

IV. 1. On the same principles, ye *masters* are to be exhorted and charged, that ye *render unto* [*your*] *servants justice and equity*; even to those who are most entirely in your power, and who have no human appeal left, whatever wrongs they may receive; *knowing that ye also have a Master in the heavens*, to whom you must give an account, whose power is irresistible, and who seeing, as he does, the whole of your conduct, will another day bring you unto judgment for every relation you have sustained, and will not forget your treatment of your very slaves. And that on the whole, all these different duties may be well discharged, and all these relations in life properly filled up, *persevere in* fervent and earnest *prayer* to God, *watching* against negligence

IV. 1. Masters, give unto *your* servants that which is just and equal knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.

2 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same

same with thanksgiving;

gence and indolence *in it*, and endeavouring to keep up your hearts and your hopes, *with* a mixture of *thanksgiving* for those mercies which you have already received in answer to former petitions, or in which God has prevented you with the blessings of his goodness. And these are so various and so important, that, in whatever circumstances you are, you will necessarily have cause for praise. SECT. vii. Col. IV. 2.

3 Withal, praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:

At the same time also, 3 in a particular manner be *praying for us*[a], *that God may open to us a door of utterance* (compare 1 Cor. xvi. 9); that I may have an opportunity *to speak* of the gospel in general, and the right of the believing Gentiles to all its privileges, even *the mystery of Christ, for which also I am in bonds;* bonds then most grievous to me, when they prove an obstruction to that great business and joy of my life, the propagation of that sacred scheme and system of truths in which the glory of God and the happiness of men is so highly concerned. And pray *that*, when 4 these restraints shall be taken off, *I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak*, and may never be so terrified by the most formidable enemies or dangers, as in any degree to suppress it.

4 That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

5 Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.

As for yourselves, *walk in wisdom towards* 5 *them that are without* the pale of the church, your heathen neighbours, and particularly your magistrates, doing nothing to disgrace religion in their eyes, or unnecessarily to exasperate them against you; *redeeming the time;* endeavouring to employ it as usefully as you can, and to protract your period of service as long as may be, by prudently declining any dangers to which duty does not require you to expose yourselves.

6 Let your speech *be* alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that

Let your speech [*be*] *always with grace*[b], con- 6 ducted in the most mild and courteous, the most proper and graceful manner; so that it may appear influenced by a governing principle of Divine grace and unfeigned piety in your hearts. Let it in this respect be so *seasoned with* the *salt* of heavenly wisdom, as may render it savoury and edifying. In this view reflect upon things and

a *Praying for us.*] Dr. Whitby justly observes, that it is very remarkable that Paul, who so often and so earnestly entreats the intercession of his Christian friends, should never speak of the intercession of the *virgin Mary*, or of departed *saints* or *angels*, if he believed it a duty to seek it.

b *Always with grace.*] Dr. *Scott* thinks, that the phrase ἐν χαριτι signifies *cheerful* and *agreeable*, not whining and melancholy. *Scott's Christian Life*, Vol. I. p. 285. I have included this in the *paraphrase*, but cannot apprehend it was chiefly designed.

SECT. vii. and circumstances before you speak, *that you may* not utter any thing which would be rash and foolish, but may *know how you ought to answer every one* who may question you about your religion and your conduct, in a manner that may most effectually tend to your own security, and to the edification of others. Compare 1 Pet. iii. 15.

that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

Col. IV. 6.

IMPROVEMENT.

Chap. iii. 18—24. How happy will particular persons, families, and larger societies be, if these apostolic maxims be carefully pursued! While *wives* are *submissive to their husbands, and husbands affectionate to their wives; children obedient to their parents*, and *parents* tenderly 13 *careful of their children; servants revering* the commands of *their masters*, and conscientiously and constantly attending to their interests; and *masters* concerned to maintain all *equity* in their be- iv. 1 haviour to those of their *servants* who are most entirely in their power; remembering on all sides the account to be given to the iii. 24 supreme *Master in heaven*, and humbly looking for the *reward of the inheritance.*

To engage a steady and uniform care in all these various duties, and to make us truly good in every relation of life, let us iv. 2 be daily drawing down grace from God, by *continuing instant in prayer;* and, as our spirits are so ready to grow cold and indifferent in it, let us *watch thereunto*, lest by insensible degrees we grow *remiss* in the performance, and from that remissness come entirely or frequently to *neglect* it.

Let every mercy we receive from God awaken our thankfulness, and animate our devotion; and let us not forget in our prayers *the ministers of Christ;* but ask for them those *assistances* from on high which may enable them to *open their mouth boldly*, in declaring that mysterious and important doctrine with which they are charged, and on which the salvation of immortal souls depends.

To enforce their labours as much as possible, let us add the influence of a regular and amiable behaviour, conducting ourselves 5 with *wisdom towards all*, and particularly those who are *strangers* to religion; and *redeeming time*, as those that know its infinite importance, because they see *eternity* connected with it. And, that we may not, as is so frequent, lose the time we spend in *con-* 6 *versation*, let us seek more of the *salt of* Divine grace in our hearts, to correct their innate corruption, and learn the happy art of improving discourse well, and of answering others in such a manner, that without dictating to them, we may gently lead them to the most

most useful reflections, and make our *lips*, like those of the righteous, *a fountain of life* unto them. (Prov. x. 11.)

SECT. VIII.

The Apostle concludes his epistle to the Colossians with recommending Tychicus and Onesimus to them, and inserts various salutations, and a solemn admonition to Archippus. Col. IV. 7, *to the end.*

Col. IV. 7.

ALL my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, *who is* a beloved brother, and a faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord:

Colossians IV. 7. SECT. viii.

IT is now time that I should draw towards the close of this epistle, which I will not enlarge by insisting particularly on *the things which relate to myself:* for *Tychicus*[a], *a beloved brother, and a faithful deacon* of your church, *and fellow-servant* with me *in the* delightful work of our common *Lord, will make* them *known to you* by word of mouth, in a more particular manner than I can now conveniently write of them. Col. IV. 7.

8 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts;

To him I entrust this epistle, and to him I refer 8 you for an account of my present situation, *whom I have* now *sent to you for this very purpose, that he may know your affairs,* and when he returns to me again (as I hope he quickly will) I may know them also; *and* that he in the mean time *may comfort your hearts* by his Christian counsels and exhortations, as well as by the information he may bring you of what has passed here, and of the state of the churches around, so far as I have been made acquainted with it.

9 With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things which *are done* here.

And *with* him comes *Onesimus*[b], *a* 9 *faithful and beloved brother,* [*who*] *is one of you,* and has resided at Rome some time. *They will* be able more particularly to *inform you of the state of things here.*

10 Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner saluteth you, and Marcus sister's

Aristarchus, once my companion and fellow- 10 labourer at Ephesus (Acts xix. 29), and now *my fellow-captive* for the sake of the gospel, *salutes you* in the Lord; *and* John *Mark,* who is *sister's*

a *Tychicus.*] From comparing this verse with Eph. vi. 21, 22, where Tychicus is mentioned as sent by Paul from Rome to Ephesus, a city, not very far from Colosse, it may, I think (as has been already observed in the *Introduction* to this *epistle,* and in that to the Ephesians), be very probably inferred, that these two *epistles,* which contain many passages very nearly resembling one another, were written about the *same time,* and might be sent together.

b *Onesimus.*] This verse makes it probable, that this *epistle,* if it was not written, was at least delivered after that to Philemon, and that the admirable letter to him produced its desired effect. See the *Introduction* to the Ephesians, p. 315.

SECT. viii.

Col. IV. 10.

sister's son to that great and excellent apostle *Barnabas, concerning whom ye have* formerly *received instructions:* he will quickly leave these parts; I desire therefore that, *if he comes to you,* ye would *receive him* with all respect and affection, as he is one who, whatever misunderstanding there might once have been between us, is entitled to my sincerest esteem[c]. (Compare Acts xv. 38.) *And* I am also to send you the salutation of *Jesus, who is called Justus*[d], and well deserves the name, on account of his strict and approved integrity. *These* whom I have named last *are the only persons, who, being of the circumcision,* [*have been*] *fellow-labourers with me in the* service of the *kingdom of God,* and *who have been a comfort to me* under my sufferings in the defence of its interests, and been ready to concur with me in any endeavours for its advancement.

sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments; if he come unto you, receive him;)

11 And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only *are my* fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.

12 *Epaphras, who is one of your* own *society,* and whom I judge to be *a* most faithful *servant of Christ, salutes you,* and is *always striving* and wrestling with God *for you in* [*his*] *prayers, that ye may* attain to the greatest improvements and establishment in Christianity, and so *stand,* amidst all temptations and dangers, *perfect and complete in the whole will of God,* and may retain the purity of the gospel, unadulterated with those debasing mixtures which some are so eager to introduce. I am fully persuaded, that he is thus mindful of you at the throne of grace; *for I* can *bear witness to him, that he has great zeal for you, and for* all *those* Christians that are in your parts, and particularly *in* the neighbouring cities of *Laodicea and Hierapolis.*

12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect, and complete in all the will of God.

13 For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.

14 *Luke, the beloved physician*[e], who is deservedly dear to you and to me, and to all our fellow-Christians,

14 Luke the beloved phy-

c *My sincerest esteem.*] That, notwithstanding the breach mentioned in the *text* referred to, there had been an entire reconciliation between Paul and Mark, farther appears from 2 Tim. iv. 11, and Philem. ver. 24.

d *Jesus who is called Justus.*] Mr. *Fleming* thinks that good man changed his name from a principle of *conscience,* as questioning at least whether it was *lawful* to wear that which had been Divinely appropriated to the great Saviour; which seems to have been his *own* opinion. *Flem. Christol.* Vol. III. p. 604. But I can scarce think he would have exchanged it for that of Justus, which rather seems to be an *additional* name which the respect of his friends had bestowed upon him.

e *Luke, the beloved physician.*] From comparing this with ver. 11, where Paul says, he had no fellow-labourer of the *circumcision,* but those whom he had named, the late Lord Barrington concludes, that Luke was a *proselyte of the gate* before he was converted to Christianity. And I think it may be fairly concluded that he was not a Jew.

f *Read*

physician, and Demas, greet you.

15 Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.

16 And when this epistle is read amongst you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.

Christians, *salutes you; and Demas* likewise, who hitherto continues with me. SECT. viii.

Salute, in my name, *the* Christian *brethren in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church that is in his house:* for I know there are several Christians, who either reside in it, or meet for social worship there. Col. IV. 15.

And, as I am desirous that my writings during my confinement may be as useful as possible to my Christian friends, I desire that *when this epistle is read* publicly *to you* in your religious assembly, as (having inscribed it to the whole society) I am assured it will be, you *cause it also to be read to the church of the Laodiceans; and* for that purpose take proper methods for conveying it immediately to them; *that* so *you may also* the more easily have an opportunity to *read that* which I have written to them, and which I doubt not but you may procure *from Laodicea;* as, on your imparting this to them, they will see it is my request that it may be communicated to you[f]. 16

Before

f *Read that from Laodicea.*] Commentators are much divided as to the interpretation of these words. The ancients generally thought the *epistle* here referred to was that to the Ephesians, which being inscribed to the chief church in these parts (and, as Archbishop *Wake*, in his Preface to the *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 94, by a much more modern name, calls it the *metropolis*), might be communicated to the Laodiceans, and so to the Colossians. But there is no direction of this kind in that *epistle*, and it would have been much more natural for Paul to have directed these Colossians to have sent to Ephesus for an epistle inscribed to that church.—There is no ground however to imagine that it refers (as some have thought) to an *epistle* written by the apostle Paul from Laodicea, where it is reasonable to conclude, from Col. ii. 1, that he had never been; nor can I think it likely, that it means an *epistle* written to him *from the church of Laodicea*, which the apostle would not have ordered to be *read* publicly *in the church* in the same manner with *his own epistle*.——Others have much more probably supposed that it was an *epistle* written *to the Laodiceans* by St. Paul, though the *epistle* extant under that name (which may be seen in *Fabricius, Cod. Apocr.* Vol. II. p. 873) has nothing so remarkable in its contents as to make it at all requisite for *this church* to send for it; and indeed has not any of the spirit and flame of the apostle Paul, or any thing worthy of him but what is borrowed from his *other epistles*, though it be even shorter than that to Philemon. We may rather conclude it to be *now lost;* for all the *epistles* which the *apostles* ever wrote are not preserved, any more than all the *words* and *actions* of our blessed Lord. (Compare John xx. 30, and xxi. 25.)—If this be not allowed, we must refer it (as above) to the *epistle* to the Ephesians, which might be intended, as some think, to be communicated as *a circular epistle*, and a copy of it ordered to be sent to Laodicea, from whence, as it lay nearer to them, the Colossians might more easily obtain it than from Ephesus. This has the rather been supposed, as the *epistle* to the Ephesians is the only one of all *Paul's epistles* that has nothing in it peculiarly adapted to the state of *that church* to which it is directed, but has much of common concernment to all Christians, especially to the Gentile converts. And in this case it is no wonder the *apostle* should make such a reference, as there is so great a resemblance between this *epistle* to the Colossians and that to the Ephesians, and as so many of the sentiments only suggested *here* are more largely illustrated *there*. Compare Col. i. 26, with Eph. iii. 9; Col. ii. 13, with Eph. ii. 1, &c. Col. iii. 11, with Eph. i. 10, &c. Col. iii. 18, 19, with Eph. v. 22—33, and the like.

g *Say*

SECT. viii.

Col. IV. 17.

Before I conclude, I must add one word by way of particular caution and exhortation to one person among you, whose character is of great *and* public importance. *Say* therefore *to Archippus*[g], in my name and in your own, *take heed to the ministry, which thou hast received in the* name and by the authority of the *Lord* Jesus Christ, *that thou fulfil it* with diligence and care; for the consequence of neglecting this high and holy office, after having so solemnly undertaken it, will be infinitely dangerous and fatal.

17 And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry, which thou hast received of the Lord, that thou fulfil it.

18 Thus far have I used the pen of a friend; but now I add *the salutation of* [*me*] *Paul*, written *with mine own hand*, as a token of the genuineness of the epistle. *Remember my bonds*, and bear me upon your heart with that affection which you owe to an apostle, and to one who is now a confessor for the truth he hath preached. *Grace* [*be*] *with you* from Christ, the fountain of it. *Amen.* You have my repeated and most affectionate prayers for it, and may the God of grace and peace confirm it by his most efficacious Amen.

18 The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace *be* with you. Amen.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 11 10

THE friendly disposition of *St. Paul* fails not to shew itself in the close, as well as entrance of every *epistle*, and indeed runs through all the parts of each. It cannot but give some pleasure to the *pious reader*, to whom the memory of such a servant of *Christ* will always be precious, to find that there were some even of *the circumcision* that were *comforts to him* in his affliction; as well as that *John Mark*, *the nephew of Barnabas*, was so thoroughly reconciled, and made one of his most agreeable and useful *friends;* though there was a time when *Paul* thought it inconsistent with prudence and duty to admit him as a companion. *He that reproveth a man shall afterwards find more favour than he who flattereth with the tongue.* (Prov. xxviii. 23.) And if the faithfulness of plain rebukes may be the means of recovering our brethren to a sense of their duty, they will no doubt be sensible of the obligation, and it will add firmness and endearment to future friendship.

When

g *Say to Archippus.*] This seems an intimation that Archippus, whoever he were, was not so *diligent* and *active* in the prosecution of his *ministry* as could have been wished. But that his fault was entangling himself with Jewish disputations, as some have supposed, is so far from being *evident*, that I see nothing to make it at all *probable*.

When *Epaphras* was at a distance from his brethren at *Colosse*, he was not only *praying* for them, but as the word signifies, *wrestling with God in his prayers on their account;* an important evidence of his Christian affection for them. And how well were his petitions chosen! That they might not only be sincerely good, as they already were, but *perfect and complete in all the will of God;* that there might be in their hearts and actions a more *entire* conformity to it. May that be our character and happiness to have respect to *all* God's commandments, and to carry our regards to them as far as we possibly can. SECT. VIII. Ver. 12

Commendable, and perfectly consistent with the strictest modesty, was the concern which the *apostle* expresses, that his *epistles* might be diffused as far as possible, and that *Christians* in different societies might receive the benefit of them. And indeed they turn so much upon matters of universal importance, that they are admirably calculated for the edification of those who may live in the most distant countries and ages. Surely there cannot be a more sacrilegious attempt upon *Christian liberty* and *piety* than to take them away from the *common people*, to whom *Paul* expressly ordered they should be *publicly* read: nor can there be greater madness than to pretend to guard men from *error* and *heresy*, by concealing from them *writings* which the *Holy Spirit* himself suggested, to lead them to *truth* and *holiness.* 16

We know not what there might be so particular in the character or circumstances of *Archippus* as to require the solemn *admonition* with which the *epistle* closes. But whatever the occasion of it were, it certainly suggests a most useful and important thought to *all the ministers* of the gospel. It is *of the Lord Jesus Christ* that they *receive their ministry;* to him they are quickly to render a strict account of it. May they all therefore *take heed* to it! May they be sensible of the importance of the trust, and have grace to be faithful in it; that they may *give up their account* with the *joy* of that *steward*, who having approved his fidelity on earth, shall receive his reward in heaven. *Amen!* 17

THE END OF THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR ON THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR,

A PARAPHRASE

ON

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO THE

THESSALONIANS.

WITH

CRITICAL NOTES, AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.

A

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

THIS *epistle* is addressed to the inhabitants of Thessalonica, a large populous city, the metropolis of Macedonia. It stood upon the Thermaian bay, which was part of the Egean sea, and was so called from Thermæ, the ancient name of the city.

It appears from the history of the Acts (chap. xvii. 1), that the Christian religion was planted here by Paul and Silas, soon after they left Philippi, where they had met with such unworthy treatment. (Compare Acts xvi. 24, with 1 Thess. ii. 2.) At their first entrance, they preached with so much success, that great numbers of the Gentiles, and some of the Jews, who were settled in that city, embraced the gospel with the utmost readiness. (Compare 1 Thess. i. 5, 9.) But the *unbelieving* Jews, animated by the same inveterate spirit with their brethren in Judea, stirred up the idolatrous inhabitants against the apostle and his Christian friends, and in a riotous manner assaulted the house where some of them were assembled; but, not finding Paul and Silas, as they expected, they carried Jason and some others of the *brethren* before the magistrate, who took security for their good behaviour, and then dismissed them. In the mean while, the *apostle* and his companion having been concealed by their friends till the storm was a little abated were obliged to leave them abruptly, and go in the night to Berea: where for some time they met with a very favourable reception; but were soon disturbed by the malice of these restless enemies who pursued them thither; and the apostle had once more the mortification to leave a place that seemed to promise so rich a harvest. Acts xvii. 1—14.

But the opposition which these bigots made to the gospel, and which they continued after the *apostle's* departure (1 Thess. ii. 14), was not sufficient to shake the faith of the new converts; who, as appears from this epistle (chap. i. 3—10; ii. 13, 14), distinguished themselves above all the other churches for the zeal and constancy with which they adhered to the Christian cause, and the

honourable character they maintained. No wonder therefore the *apostle* should express in such strong terms his esteem and affection for them, and the satisfaction it gave him to see such happy fruits of his labours.

It cannot be certainly determined from the history, what stay the *apostle* made at Thessalonica. Some have imagined, from Acts xvii. 3, that he was there only *three weeks:* but as it appears that, during his abode in that city, he not only wrought with his own hands to procure a subsistence (1 Thess. ii. 9 ; 2 Thess. iii. 8), but also received supplies more than once from Philippi (compare Phil. iv. 16), it is much more probable that, after the Jews had discovered such an invincible prejudice against the gospel, he desisted from disputing or teaching in their synagogues after the *third sabbath*, and then preached for some time among the Gentiles, before he was driven out of the city. See Vol. VIII. § 39, *note* [a], p. 156.

However, as it is certain his stay was not very considerable, and as he had left his Christian friends there in so much distress, on his as well as their own account, he sent Timothy to them from Athens (for which place he had sailed immediately upon his leaving Berea), to confirm them in their attachment to the gospel, and comfort them under their concern for his sufferings. (Chap. iii. 1—5.) Timothy, at his return, found the *apostle* at Corinth (Acts xviii. 5,) where he continued near *two years*, (Acts xviii. 11,) from whence it has generally been concluded, and with great reason, that this *epistle*, in which he takes some particular notice of the agreeable account he had received of their character from Timothy, (Chap. iii. 6,) was wrote from thence, not long after his arrival, (compare chap. ii. 17 ;) which will fix the date of it about the year of our Lord 52, or the 12th of the emperor Claudius. See Vol. VIII. § 41, *note* [i] and [k], p. 177.

The *apostle's* design in this *epistle* is, in general, to confirm the Thessalonians in their adherence to the Christian faith, and to engage them from the sufferings they had already endured in that cause, and the extraordinary character they had hitherto maintained, to make still greater advances in religion, and become yet more eminent in every branch of the Christian temper.

In pursuance of this design, having, in the inscription of the epistle, joined Timothy and Sylvanus, (or Silas) who had assisted him in establishing the church at Thessalonica) with himself, the apostle expresses his great satisfaction in the sincerity with which the Thessalonians embraced the gospel when it was first preached to them, and in the exemplary character they had since maintained ; to which he assures them all the churches bore an honourable testimony, and by which they had greatly advanced the credit of their Christian profession. Chap. i. *throughout.*

And, in order to preserve his influence with them, and consequently to add the greater weight to his admonitions, he reminds them of the courage and fidelity with which he had preached the gospel at his first entrance among them, in spite of all the danger

to

to which his zeal exposed him; and appeals to them for the unexceptionable and disinterested manner in which he had behaved towards them while he continued there, and the tender affectionate concern he had always shewn for their religious interests; Chap ii. 1—12. The reflection upon the pains he had taken with them, naturally led him to acknowledge, with the utmost thankfulness, the happy success that had attended his labours, in their conversion to the Christian faith, which they openly and courageously professed, notwithstanding all the difficulties and dangers they were obliged to encounter. He observes to them, that *he* himself, and his fellow-Christians in Judea, had met with the same ill-treatment from the perverseness of their own countrymen, who opposed his preaching the gospel to the Gentiles; and assures them, that though he had, by the malice of his enemies, been unwillingly detained from them longer than he intended, he felt the same warmth of affection for them,and rejoiced in them as his glory and his crown; ver. 13, *to the end.*

As a farther proof of his regard, the apostle informs them, that when he came to Athens, he was so much concerned, lest being discouraged by his sufferings, they should be tempted to cast off their profession, that he could not forbear sending Timothy to comfort and strengthen them; and expresses in very strong terms the sensible pleasure he felt, in the midst of all his afflictions, from the agreeable account he received of their faith and love; to which he adds, that he was continually praying for their farther establishment in religion, and for an opportunity of making them another visit, in order to promote their edification, which lay so near his heart. Chap. iii. *throughout.*

The *apostle* having thus given the Thessalonians a sufficient testimony of his sincere regard, proceeds to renew the practical exhortations he had given them in the name of Christ, while he continued with them; recommending, in particular, chastity, in opposition to all kinds of uncleanness for which the idolatrous Gentiles were so notorious; justice, in opposition to all manner of fraud and dishonesty; charity, in which he acknowledges they already excelled; and a diligent application to their proper business, joined with a prudent behaviour towards their heathen neighbours. Chap. iv. 1—12.—In order to comfort them under the loss of some of their Christian friends, of whose death it is probable the apostle might have heard by Timothy, he assures them, that those who were fallen asleep in Jesus should be raised again at the last day, and, together with those that remained alive, should be caught up to meet their Lord, and share his triumph, ver. 13, *to the end.*——And, having thus laid a solid foundation on which to build their hope, he takes occasion to press upon them the necessity of preparing for so awful an event, that it might not overtake them unawares; and represents the peculiar obligations they were under to sobriety and watchfulness, from the superior light and knowledge they enjoyed, and the hopes they were taught to entertain from the death and resurrection of Christ. Chap. v. 1—11.

The

The *apostle*, in the conclusion of his *epistle*, recommends to them a respectful behaviour to their ministers, and lays down some directions for their conduct towards persons of different tempers and characters in the church, adding other practical precepts of a more general nature; and, having offered up a solemn petition for their farther advancement and stedfastness in religion, he closes with his usual benediction, ver 12, *to the end of the epistle.*

From this analysis of the *epistle*, the reader cannot but have observed, what a paternal affection and concern the *apostle* discovers for these new converts: and it is remarkable, with how much address he improves all that influence which his zeal and fidelity in their service must naturally give him to inculcate upon them the precepts of the gospel, and persuade them to act agreeably to their sacred character. This was the grand point he kept always in view; and to which every thing else was made subservient. Nothing appears, in any part of his writings, like a design to establish his own reputation, or to make use of his ascendency over his Christian friends, to answer any *secular* purposes of *his own:* on the contrary, in this, and in his other epistles, he discovers a most generous disinterested regard for *their* welfare, expressly disclaiming all authority over their consciences, and appealing to them that he had chose to maintain himself by the labour of his own hands, rather than prove burdensome to the churches, or give the least colour for a suspicion, that, under pretence of zeal for the gospel, and concern for their improvement, he was carrying on any private sinister views.

The discovery of so excellent a temper, as it tends greatly to raise our idea of the *apostle*, so it must be allowed to carry with it a strong presumptive argument in favour of the doctrines he taught, and consequently of the truth of Christianity itself: for he evidently appears to have been governed by the very same principles he recommends to others, and, by their influence, to have been raised above all regard to his *temporal* interests, and every motive that could come in competition with the honour of God, and the advancement of religion in the world. And indeed whoever reads over *St. Paul's* epistles with attention, and enters into the spirit with which they were wrote, will discern such intrinsic characters of their *genuineness*, and the Divine authority of the doctrines they contain, as will perhaps produce in him a stronger conviction than all the *external* evidence with which they are attended. To which we may add, that the exact coincidence, observable between the many *allusions* to particular facts, in this as well as in other *epistles*, and the account of the facts themselves, as they are recorded in the history of the Acts, is a remarkable confirmation of the truth of each. Compare vol. VIII. § 39, *note*[a], p, 156.

A PARA-

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO THE

THESSALONIANS.

SECT. I.

The Apostle Paul, after the usual salutations, expresses his joy in the character of the Thessalonians to whom he wrote, and in the credit they did to their Christian profession, by a behaviour so worthy of it. 1 Thess. I. 1, *throughout.*

1 Thess. I. 1.

PAUL, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians, *which is* in God the Father, and *in* the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace *be* unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 THESSALONIANS I. 1.

PAUL and Sylvanus, otherwise called Silas, *and Timothy*, all well known as the servants and ministers of Christ, join in this address *to the* beloved and happy *church*, which he by his grace hath lately founded among you *of the Thessalonians*, who have now the honour to stand *in* an intimate and dear relation to *God, the Father* of all true Believers, *and* to *the Lord Jesus Christ*, our common and adorable Saviour. And we all most sincerely wish *grace and peace unto you* in the richest abundance, *from God our Father, and* from *the Lord Jesus Christ.* SECT. I. 1 Thess. I. 1.

2 We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers.

We think ourselves obliged to *give thanks to God always* with one accord *for you all, making* continual *mention of you in our* daily *prayers. Incessantly remembering* in every address to the Divine throne *your work of faith*, the readiness with which you embraced the gospel of Christ; the vigour with which you declared your dependence 2

3 Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour 3

SECT. i.

1 Thess. 1. 3.

pendence upon it; *and* in consequence of that dependence, your *labour of love*, the charitable and affectionate zeal with which you embarked in the interests of his persecuted servants: *and* your *patience* in result *of* that blessed *hope* which was brought unto you *by* the gospel and grace of *our Lord Jesus Christ*, and solemnly professed *before God, even our Father*, who will not suffer the graces which he hath wrought in you by his blessed Spirit to fail of their proper rewards [a].

bour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God, and our Father:

4 And this we write with all freedom and endearment, *knowing beloved brethren, your* participation in the *election of God*, and fully persuaded that you are in the number of those whom he will finally own as his chosen people, for whom before the foundation of the world he 5 had prepared a kingdom. Of which, blessed be his name, we have the most important and satisfactory evidence; *because our gospel*, that is, the gospel which we preach, and which was solemnly committed to our charge, *came not to you in word only*, so as to be a mere empty sound, or to convey only amusing ideas to your mind, *but also in power*, so as to make very deep and powerful impressions on your hearts; *and* indeed such impressions as could only be the result of its coming to you *in the* power of the *Holy Ghost*, whose miraculous and gracious influence concurred to add force to it. *And* then it is no wonder that it came *in much assurance*, so that you could not possibly doubt of its truth, when you thus saw its evidence, and felt its efficacy. And its success was farther promoted by the good example which we who preached it were enabled to give; *as you well know*, and I am confident, will never forget, *what manner of persons we were among you*, what vigour and zeal we exerted for your conversion, and how we conducted ourselves in the whole of our behaviour, with respect to you, and all around us, as well as with what fortitude we faced all the persecutions we were called to encounter *for your sakes*. 6 *And* the happy consequence of all was, that *you became imitators of us, and* I bless God I may add

4 Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.

5 For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance, as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

6 And ye became followers of us, and of the

a *Work of faith, labour of love, and patience of hope.*] All these are plainly Hebraisms for *active faith, laborious love,* and *patient hope,* and might very properly have been so translated.

b *In*

the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:

add, therein *of the Lord* Jesus Christ too, both in the holiness of your lives, and in the courage and patience with which you endure those sufferings which lay in the way of your duty; *having received the word in much affliction*, from the rage and fury of your unreasonable enemies, and yet *with joy of the Holy Ghost;* rejoicing, under his powerful influences, in the reception of that holy religion to which you were so early called to make such great and important sacrifices. SECT. i. 1 Thes. I. 6.

7 So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.

So that indeed *ye* soon *became* eminent 7 in the churches of Christ, and *examples to all the believers in Macedonia, and in* the more distant province of *Achaia*[b], where the Corinthian converts, famous as they soon were (1 Cor. i. 7), heard of your religious character with pleasure and emulation.

8 For from you sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad, so that we need not to speak any thing.

For from you the word of the 8 *Lord sounded forth*, and you were eager, by your messengers, to spread the joyful tidings of the gospel, *not only in* your own borders of *Macedonia, and* in *Achaia*, with which you had an easy correspondence, *but also* wherever Providence gave you any access; so that, *in every* remoter *place*, the fame and effect of *your faith toward God* and the Lord Jesus Christ *came in such a degree as made it* almost *unnecessary for us* particularly *to recount any thing* of your conversion, or progress in the truth.

9 For they themselves shew of us, what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God.

For they themselves, among whom we came, *declare* it to us *concerning* you, and make it the subject of their pleasing conversation with *us*, and with one another, *what a* wonderful *kind of entrance we had among you*, in our first visit, *and* what a reception you gave us, that is, *how ye turned to God from* those contemptible *idols*, in the worship of which ye had been educated, with a firm resolution at all events *to serve the living and true God*, with that diligence and zeal which his service so justly demands.

10 And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the

And you found your- 10 selves disposed, by your growing knowledge of him, *to* lay aside all immoderate attachments to the interests and concerns of this present life, that with fixed faith, and cheerful expectation, ye might *wait for* the triumphant coming of *his Son from heaven;* of that illustrious Son, *whom*, as

b *In Macedonia and Achaia.*] The *apostle* mentions these parts, as he had just been travelling through them before he came to Corinth, from whence (as we have shewn in the Introduction, p. 502) he wrote this *epistle*. Compare Acts xvii. 14, 15; xviii. 1.

SECT. i.

as a proof of his Divine mission and designation to the office of universal Judge, *he hath raised from the dead*, and now exalted to his own right hand; [*even*] *Jesus*, the long-expected and ever to be adored Saviour, *who rescues us from the wrath* which is assuredly *to come* upon all impenitent sinners, and makes us, in consequence of our faith in him, not only safe from that flaming ruin, but secure of possessing an happiness complete and eternal.

1 Thes. I. 10.

the dead, *even* Jesus which delivered us from the wrath to come.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. We see here a compendious view of the *Christian* character.
9 It is to *turn from idols*, from every thing which we have loved and esteemed, from every thing which we have pursued and trusted in an irregular degree, *to serve the living and true God;* under a real sense of his infinite perfections and glories. It is turning also to
10 *Jesus* his Son, as *saving us from the wrath to come:* from a deep conviction of our being justly exposed to wrath by our transgressions against God, to seek rescue and refuge in *Christ*, as *delivering* us from it, by his *atonement* and grace, and completing that deliverance by Almighty *power*, in the day of his final triumph. It is to look and *wait* with unshaken faith and with holy joy for *Jesus, the Son of God from heaven;* keeping the eye of our soul habitually directed towards him, the loins of our mind continually girded up, and ourselves as *servants who look for their Lord's coming*. In the mean time may we maintain the *work of faith*, and
3 *labour of love*, and *patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God, even our Father.*

If this be the effect of our receiving the gospel, it will evidently prove that it is *come to us, not only in word, but in power,*
4, 5 *and in the Holy Ghost;* and it may give us abundant *assurance* of our interest in God, and cause us by the happiest tokens to *know*
6 *our election* of him. Whatever *afflictions* may in that case be allotted to us, while we hereby become *followers of the apostles and of Christ*, we may rejoice in the Lord. The ministers of Christ will rejoice in such an *entrance* among their people, as shall produce these blessed consequences, and the *word of God* will be *sounded*
9 *forth* with the greatest advantage by those who are pleading for
8 its truth, efficacy, and importance, by this silent but powerful eloquence. May this character be every where more prevalent among those that call themselves *Christians*, and may *grace* and *peace from God our Father*, and from the *Lord Jesus Christ, be with all* in whom it is found!

SECT.

SECT. II.

The Apostle leads the Thessalonians to reflect upon the manner in which he and his brethren in the Christian ministry behaved among them when they visited them at first, and laid the foundation of a church in their city. 1 Thess. II. 1—12.

1 THES. II. 1.
FOR yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain.

1 THESSALONIANS II. 1.

I HAVE been mentioning the encouragement our ministry among you first met with and the blessed effects that attended it. But I need not insist more largely upon them, *for ye yourselves know*, my *brethren*, and I am persuaded you can never forget, *the entrance that we had unto you ;* with what demonstration of Divine agency in and by us it was attended, and what a powerful effect it had upon your minds, so *that it was not in vain.* It was not a transient and trifling amusement, but solemn in itself, and attended with important consequences and effects, which will be everlasting. *But* the recollection is so delightful to my mind, that you must permit me, known as it is, to lead back my own thoughts to the review, and to remind you, how *even when we had* just *before suffered* the greatest indignities, *and* had *been* so *injuriously treated, as ye know at Philippi*, where we were stripped and scourged by the common beadle, and thrust into prison, with our feet set fast in the stocks (Acts xvi. 22—24), we no sooner arrived among you, but *we were bold in* our humble dependence on the powerful support of *our God ; to speak unto you* in the neighbouring city, *the gospel of God*, and this, though we were forced to do it *with* so *much contention*, because of the opposition excited against us by the perverse and unbelieving Jews. (Acts xvii. 1—9.) And we were supported in these courageous efforts from a secret consciousness of that integrity with which our ministry was conducted ; *for our exhortation* to persuade you to embrace the gospel [*was*] *not* calculated to corrupt your morals, as being founded on any principles *of deceit or of uncleanness ;* we had no mercenary or sensual purposes to serve, as your idolatrous priests often have, *nor* was there *in* our management any thing of guile and *craftiness*

SECT. ii. 1 Thes. II. 1.

2 But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.

2

3 For our exhortation *was* not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile :

3

SECT. ii.

ness which could fear the detection of the strictest scrutiny. *But* all was fair and open, simple and artless, and *as we have been approved by God*, so far as *to be intrusted with the* invaluable treasure of his *gospel*, so we did then address you, and *so we* continue to *speak, not as pleasing men*, and accommodating our doctrine to their tastes and prejudices, *but* as endeavouring always to secure the approbation of that *God who trieth our hearts* with as great care and exactness as gold is proved in the furnace, that it may be separated from dross, or the mixture of any baser metals. *Neither did we at any time deal in flattering words*, to insinuate ourselves into your affections, and soothe you in your sins, *as ye* well *know; nor* had we recourse to *a pretence of* piety, to promote the schemes of *covetousness*, often artfully conducted under the covert of religious zeal. *God* [*is*] our *witness*, that we were far above every thing of this kind, and made all such views our first sacrifice to the glory of his name and the propagation of his gospel. *Nor did we seek glory* and applause *of men, neither of you, nor of* any *others* among whom we laboured and conversed; nor did we press you with regard to any maintenance, *though we might have been* in some degree *burdensome, as the apostles of Christ*[a], who had authorised us to take a necessary subsistence from our hearers, as we certainly brought you what was far more valuable than any thing which we could in return have received from you. *But we were* still mild, *gentle*, and condescending *in the midst of you, even as a nurse* or mother *cherishes her own children* while hanging on her breast, and feels an inexpressible pleasure in imparting that nourishment to them with which God in his gracious providence has been pleased to furnish her. *So we, being* most *tenderly affectionate towards you, took pleasure to impart to you, not only the gospel of God*, which was lodged with us, for the food and life of our fellow creatures, *but even our own souls* too, *because ye were dear unto us;* so dear, that our heart was in every word while we addressed you, and we could with

1 Thes. II. 4.

4 But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God which trieth our hearts.

5 For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God *is* witness.

6 Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.

7 But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children:

8 So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.

a *Might have been burdensome*, &c.] The *apostle* evidently refers to the right he had of being *maintained* at their charge. Compare ver. 9; 2 Cor. xi. 9; 1 Tim. v. 18; 1 Cor. ix. throughout. But he was acting now on the same maxims at Corinth (from whence he wrote this epistle) by which he had governed himself at Thessalonica. See Acts xviii. 3.

with pleasure even have laid down our lives among you, if that might have promoted the success of our ministry, and have conduced to the increase and edification of the church. SECT. ii. 1 Thess. II. 8.

9 For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.

You had many instances of this, which I need not largely rehearse; *for ye remember, brethren*, both *our labour* in the ministerial work *and* our *toil* in our secular profession likewise; *for night and day working* at it, taking often from the rest of the night, the hours which during the day we had spent in our ministry among you, *that we might* be able to maintain ourselves, and might *not be burdensome* and expensive *to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.* 9

10 Ye *are* witnesses, and God *also*, how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe:

And there was a consistency in the whole of our conduct which abundantly shewed the purity of those motives from which we acted in this instance. So that *ye* [*are*] *witnesses, and God* [*also,*] who sees our most secret actions, and all the recesses of our heart, *how holily, and righteously, and* how *unblameably we behaved ourselves*, not only *to* the heathens around, but in our most intimate converses with *you who believe*, still preserving the same integrity, caution, and care, to avoid every occasion of offence which we maintained among those who were strangers or enemies to our religion, and so might have been most ready to seek for pretences of objecting against it. 10

11 As ye know how we exhorted and comforted, and charged every one of you (as a father *doth* his children;)

As ye also *know how*, and with what repeated importunity, *we were exhorting and comforting every one of you* in particular, as God gave us access to you; just *as a father* encourages and instructs *his children*, labouring by every kind and endearing art of address, to form them to a wise and worthy behaviour: Thus were we animating you, and *testifying* in the most solemn manner. 11

12 That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

That ye should walk worthy of God, and of the relation in which you have the honour to stand to him, *who hath called you* by his gospel *into his kingdom*, even to the views *and* hopes of that *glory* which he hath promised to all the faithful subjects of it. 12

IMPROVEMENT.

SURELY it is not possible to conceive from any thing, but the example of *the great Shepherd of the sheep*, a more amiable idea of the character of a *gospel minister* that than which is here exhibited.

SECT. ii.

exhibited. With what a frankness and openness of soul does the *apostle* appeal to their consciences, as to the integrity and benovolence of his behaviour among them, whilst unterrified by
Ver. all the indignities and inhumanities he had met with at *Philippi*,
2 he immediately renewed the same combat at *Thessalonica*, and *contended* boldly with all the enemies of the gospel, not esteeming his liberty or his life, on an occasion of so great importance!

With such *courage let the ministers of Christ* face all danger and oppositions; with *such simplicity* of heart, let them deliver
3 their important message; not with *deceit, uncleanness, or guile*, but as those who remember that they have been *put in trust with the gospel by God* himself, and therefore must be solicitous *not to*
4 *please men, but God, who trieth the heart.* And may they ever be superior to those views of *avarice, ambition*, or popular *applause*, which would lead them to sacrifice truth to the affection
5, 6 or favour of men, or even to the fear of being thought to do it. And let them, with all this intrepidity and firmness of soul, put
7 on a *gentleness* and sweetness of disposition; a *gentleness* like that with which *a nurse cherishes her children.* While their people, like *new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that they may grow thereby* (1 Pet. ii. 2), let *ministers*, with a natural tenderness, draw forth that precious nourishment to them, as *imparting even their own souls* unto them, and willing to *wear out*, or if
8 such should be the will of God, to *sacrifice* their lives in such a service.

Let them particularly endeavour by all prudent care, suitable to the circumstances in which God has fixed them, *not to make themselves burdensome* to the people in temporal things, nor under the *pretence* of a Divine mission, to tyrannize over their consciences; but behave with such *integrity* and such *sanctity*, that they may be able cheerfully to appeal *to God* as a *witness* of it,
6 and may also have a testimony in the breast of *each* of their flock.
1 And O that the *entrance* of such ministers among their people, and their labours with them, may not be *in vain*; but that the blessed consequence of all the *charges, entreaties*, and *consolations*, they are addressing to them may be this, that they may *walk worthy of God*, worthy of that *kingdom* and *glory*, to the views and
12 blessings of which he hath condescended to *call* them! Then will all the fatigues of their office sit light upon them, while they see the blessed purposes of it answered. Then will they *finish their course with joy*, and bless God with their dying breath, that he hath chosen them to an office, the most laborious, and perhaps, in secular views, the least advantageous of any in which persons of liberal education use to engage.

SECT.

SECT III.

The Apostle goes on to bless God for the readiness with which the Thessalonians received the gospel, notwithstanding the persecution raised against them by their own countrymen, as well as the perverse opposition of the Jews, and assures them of his continued affection, though he had been hindered from visting them so soon as he intended. 1 Thess. II. 13—*to the end.*

1 THES. II. 13.

FOR this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not *as* the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

14 For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God, which in Judea, are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they *have* of the Jews:

15 Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not

1 THESSALONIANS II. 13.

SECT. iii.

THUS we laboured, and thus we behaved ourselves among you, and we are thankful that we were enabled in so conscientious a manner to discharge our duty. And *for this cause also we give thanks to God incessantly, that when ye received the word of God, which ye heard from us, ye received* [*it*] *not* with indifference and neglect, not with doubt and uncertainty, [*as*] if it had been merely *the* precarious *word of men*, an artful invention, or uncertain scheme of human philosophy, *but as (it is in truth) the* very *word of God* himself, the veracity of which is beyond all dispute or suspicion; of *which* there is this farther proof, that it *worketh* so *efficaciously in you who believe*, and produces such an happy change in your character, as may abundantly attest its Divine original. *For you, brethren*, as soon as ever you embraced it, immediately *became imitators* of the heroic behaviour and conduct *of the churches of God, which are in Judea, in Christ Jesus*, as being under the influences of the same Spirit with them, though you had not been eye-witnesses of their example. *For you also*, with the like intrepidity of resolution, *suffered the same things from those of your own* tribe and *country*, (Acts xvii. 5,) *as they* [*did*] *of* their countrymen *the Jews: Who* treated them so rigorously and cruelly, as the vilest of apostates. They call themselves indeed the peculiar people of God, but act in a manner most unworthy that Character, for they *both killed the Lord Jesus* Christ, *and their own prophets*, who foretold his appearance, and whom God in many distant ages of their commonwealth raised up unto them. *And* on the same principles also they *have persecuted us*, when we came among them as Divine messengers; *and*, on the whole, *please not God*, though they pretend to know him so well, and boast so loudly

1 Thess. II. 13. 14 15

SECT. iii.

loudly of their interest in him; but in consequence of the wrong notions they form of him, greatly offend him, *and are contrary to all men*, full of contempt and maligunity against all other nations, and behave towards them in the most perverse and unfriendly manner [a]. Of which morose and odious behaviour, this is a remarkable instance, that they are continually *forbidding us*, the apostles and messengers of God, *to speak* and preach the gospel *to the Gentiles, that they might be saved;* and by thus setting themselves against the darling scheme of Divine Providence, and opposing the most important, even the eternal interests of mankind, they seem to act as if they desired *to fill up* the measure of *their sins continually. But* Divine *wrath is* speedily *coming upon them*, and will be carried *to the greatest extremity*, not at Jerusalem only, but every where else, in their various settlements in heathen countries [b].

1 Thess. II. 15.

16

not God, and are contrary to all men;

16 Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

17 *But we, brethren, though* necessarily *separated from you for a very little season*, and as it were for a few hours [c], *in person*, but *not in heart, being exceedingly desirous to see your face again,* 18 *endeavoured it to the utmost. Therefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul* in particular, *once and a second time, but Satan*, the great

17 But we, brethren being taken from you for a short time, in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.

18 Wherefore we would have come unto you (even I Paul) once

a *Contrary to all men.*] It is well known what invincible prejudices the Jews in general entertained against all other nations; and Elsner has produced several passages from Tacitus and other heathen writers, in which they are represented as *bearing an inveterate hatred against all the rest of mankind. (Elsner. Obser.* Vol. II. p. 274.) And nothing certainly could afford a stronger proof of this malignant temper, than that perverse opposition to so benevolent a scheme as the gospel, for which the apostle passes this severe censure upon them.

b Not only at Jerusalem, &c.] Though the remarkable circumstances which attended the destruction of Jerusalem, so particularly represented by Josephus, who was an eye-witness of them, and so exactly corresponding to *our Lord's* prediction (see Vol. II. sect. clxi.) have fixed the attention of Christians, chiefly on that catastrophe; yet it is well known, that vast numbers of the Jewish nation were soon after destroyed in other provinces of the Roman empire, particularly under Trajan and Adrian: under the former, 460,000 men in Egypt and Cyprus, and under the latter, above 580,000, as Xiphilinus informs us from Dio; and the learned Mr. *Lowman* supposes these events to be referred to in the second *apocalyptic seal*, Rev. vi. 4. Compare Vol. II. sect. clxi. note m.

c *For a very little season* or for a few hours.] The original is ωρᾶς καιρον ωραν, *for an hour's time*; which is so *figurative* an expression, that I chose rather to express the sense in the *paraphrase*, than to follow the Greek literally, especially as ωρα has a signification rather more extensive than *hour*. It was several years before the apostle returned to them, but his mind was full of the ideas of *eternity*, which did, as it were, annihilate any period of mortal life. Dr. *Whitby* infers from this expression, that this *epistle* was writ quickly after Paul's leaving Thessalonica, and consequently at Corinth, the first place where he made any long stay. The word αποφαγισθεντες, in this connection, strongly expresses the *apostle's affection* for them, (compare John xv. 18, *Gr.* Vol. II. sect. clxxiv. note c,) and *concern* to leave them in an unsettled state. Compare chap. iii. 1.

once and again; but Satan hindered us.

19 For what *is* our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? *are* not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?

20 For ye are our glory and joy.

great enemy of our usefulness and comfort, *hath* hitherto *hindered us*, by the many difficulties he laid in our way. But we will be sure to take the first opportunity of doing it; *for what [is] our hope* of appearing another day with comfort before the tribunal of Christ, *or* what our *joy, or* what the *crown of rejoicing*, which we expect then to wear? *[are] not ye also* among many others, whom Divine grace has given us as the fruits of our ministry; whom we hope for the honour of presenting *before our Lord Jesus Christ, at* the day of *his* final *appearance? For ye are* now one of the most considerable churches which I have been the happy instrument of planting; and I trust ye will then appear as *our glory and* our *joy*, as the seals God hath been pleased to set to my labours, and as amiable friends, in whose converse and love I hope to be for ever happy.

SECT. iii.

1 Thess. II. 19.

20

IMPROVEMENT.

May Divine grace teach our souls ever to distinguish between the authority of the *word of men* and *the word of God;* that we may always set them at a due distance from each other, and may feel that peculiar *energy* of the Divine word with which it *operates in* all *them that believe!* May we experience this, whatever be the consequences, yea though we should be exposed to sufferings, severe as those which *Jews* or *heathens* at first inflicted on the professors, or even on the preachers of the gospel! Adored be that power of Divine grace that went along with it, so that when the envious disciples of *Moses*, after having *slain the Lord Jesus Christ*, as well as their *own prophets, forbad* his messengers *to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved*, these faithful ambassadors of health and life feared none of their threatenings or cruelties, but courageously declared the matter as it was, *testifying both to Jews and Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ!* (Acts xx. 21.)

Ver. 13 14 15

The *Jews* in the mean time *filled up* the measure of *their sins*, till *wrath came upon them to the uttermost.* And so will all the opposition that is made to the gospel end to those who are implacable and obstinate in it. They who believe not that *Christ is He* shall *die in their sins. Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder.* (John viii. 24; Mat. xxi. 44.)

16 19

Let the *ministers of Christ*, however *Satan* may attempt to *hin-* 18

SECT. iii.

der them, go on faithfully and courageously in their work, and watch over the souls which they have gained. When *absent* from
17 them *in body*, let them not be absent *in heart;* but let them be thinking of their state, and often caring and praying for them: *for what is their hope, and joy, and crown of rejoicing* in the day of the Lord, but the souls which God shall graciously give them as *spiritual children*, or to whom he shall render them useful, for training them up in those ways of holiness in which, by the blessing of God upon the labours of others, they might be so happy as to find them? May God give many such to all who *serve him with their spirit in the gospel of his Son;* and, in the views of their in-
20 creasing piety, may they daily anticipate the *glory* and the *joy with* which they hope at last to deliver them to their Divine Master!

SECT. IV.

As a farther illustration of his love, the Apostle informs the Thessalonians of his care to send Timothy to them from Athens, and of the great pleasure with which he received the tidings which that evangelist brought him; he also assures them that he was continually praying for them, and for an opportunity of making them another visit, in order to promote their edification, which lay so near his heart. 1 Thess. III. *throughout.*

SECT. iv.

1 Thess. III. 1.

1 THESSALONIANS III. 1.

SUCH is the affection we feel for you, and *therefore*, as we were by persecution separated from you, while as yet your church was in a very tender and unsettled state (Acts xvii. 10), we could not but be solicitous, to be more particularly informed how it fared with you. And, *being able no longer to endure* the uncertainty in which we were with relation to you, *we acquiesced in* the uncomfortable circumstances of *being left alone*[a] *at Athens*, where we had some peculiar need of the countenance and comfort
2 of an approved companion and friend; *And sent Timothy, our* dear *brother, and a* faithful *servant of God, and* whom we highly esteem, as *our* diligent and affectionate *fellow-labourer in the gospel of Christ*, whom you had formerly known

1 THES. III. 1.

WHEREFORE, when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone:

2 And sent Timotheus our brother and minister of God, and our

a *Left alone.*] It seems from this circumstance, that Silas was absent from Paul while that *apostle* was at Athens, though some have been of a different opinion. Compare Acts xviii. 5, which seems farther to confirm that fact.

b *Fellow-*

our fellow-labourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith;

known under that character[b]; we parted with him, inconvenient as it was, for your sakes, *that*, by making you a visit, at a time when we concluded you so much needed it, *he might strengthen and comfort you*, exhort and advise you as occasion required, *concerning* the evidences of *your faith* in general, and any particular branches of it in which you might need farther instruction. SECT. iv. 1 Thess. III. 2.

3 That no man should be moved by these afflictions; for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.

3 *That no man might be shaken* and discouraged from his adherence to the Christian profession and hope, *by* the greatest severity of *these afflictions* with which we are surrounded *for ye yourselves know that we are appointed to these*, and that one part in the scheme of God in establishing the Christian church, was to raise a society of men, who should glorify his name, and illustrate the force of true religion, by enduring the greatest extremities in its defence with fortitude and cheerfulness.

4 For verily, when we were with you, we told you before, that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.

4 *For even when we were with you, we* did not flatter you with any vain hopes of an easy and pleasurable life, but plainly and candidly *told you, before* you engaged with us, *that we should* certainly *be afflicted, as it came to pass* in fact; *and ye* well *know*, from the very nature of things, and from comparing the religion you have embraced with the tempers, prejudices, and interests of men, that there was the greatest reason to expect it.

5 For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.

5 *For this cause also, being* (as I was just saying) *no longer able to endure* the uncertainty I was in with regard to persons that in such circumstances lay so near my heart, *I sent to know* the state of *your faith* under such violent assaults, *lest by any means the tempter*, taking the advantage of the weakness of human nature, *might have tempted you* to suppress the conviction of your minds, or at least the public profession of your faith, so as to return to idolatry again; *and* so *our labour should* with respect to you *have been in vain*, as in such a case it certainly would have been, whatever secret persuasion of the truth of religion might have remained.

6 But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of

6 *But now Timothy, having returned to us from you, and* having *brought to us the good tidings of your* continued *faith, and* fervent abound-

b *Fellow-labourer.*] It appears from Acts xvii. 14, that Timothy had been in those parts before, as *Paul's fellow-labourer*, and so no doubt but he was known to the Thessalonians, and his coming on this occasion would be the more agreeable to them.

c Indeed

SECT. iv.

abounding *love*, *and* assured us *that ye have always a good* and affectionate *remembrance of us*, as your spiritual father in Christ, *greatly desiring*, if Providence might permit it, speedily [*to see us* again, *as we also* assuredly do [*to see*] *you*;

1 Thess. III. 6.

of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also *to see* you:

7 *We were hereby comforted, brethren, concerning you*, and found the happy effects of those heart-reviving consolations, *in all our tribulation and necessity*, which grew more supportable to us than it would otherwise have been, *by means of* this happy assurance of *your faith*, which God hath blessed us as the instrument of producing.

7 Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith:

8 *For now we* do indeed *live*[c], we relish and enjoy life, *if ye stand fast in the* gospel and grace of our *Lord* Jesus Christ, retaining strenuously that holy profession and precious faith which ye have embraced: whereas, were ye to be drawn aside to renounce it, our very heart would be wounded, and it would be as bitter death unto us.

8 For now we live if ye stand fast in the Lord.

9 *For what* sufficient *thanks can we* ever *render to God concerning you, for all the* flow of holy *joy with which we rejoice on your account*, for your conversion and progress in religion, when we have been presenting ourselves *before our God*, and breathing out our heart at his footstool; *Night and day* enlarging upon this, as a petition which lay nearest to our very souls, and, if I may be allowed such an expression, *superabundantly making it our request, to see your face, and to complete the deficiencies of your faith*, by instructing you in any article of religion, which, being so suddenly torn away from you, by the storm that was raised, we had not an opportunity of opening to you so clearly as your edification might have required. And we still continue to urge the humble supplication; *that God himself, even our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ*, to whom the supreme government of the kingdom of providence is committed, *may*, by a secret but powerful interposition, so dispose and over-rule all things, as to *clear* and smooth *our way to you*, by removing these obstructions which at present remain; *And*, in the mean time, yea above all, *that the Lord* Jesus Christ, by the powerful operation of his Spirit on your hearts, *may cause you to be enlarged and to abound in love toward each other, and to all* Christians, yea towards the whole human race, *even*

9 For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God;

10 Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?

11 Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you.

12 And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one towards another, and towards

c Indeed *live.*] It is well known, that in the *sacred* writings *life* is often put for *happiness*, and Dr. Whitby has produced many instances of it in his *note* here.

towards all men, even as we *do* towards you:

even as we do indeed abound in affection *towards you*, and shall always rejoice in any opportunity of manifesting it, by whatever we may be able to do, or may be called to suffer for your sakes. SECT. iv. 1 Thes. III. 12.

13 To the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints,

May you feel this noble principle of universal goodness more and more active in your minds, *that*, by the experience of its efficacy, *your hearts may be strengthened* in every virtue, [*and you*] may at length [*be*] found *blameless in holiness before God even our Father, at the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints* around him, in that illustrious day, when their sanctity and glory shall be completed, and all their labours and sufferings in his cause abundantly recompensed. 13

IMPROVEMENT.

Not farther to insist on the tender affection of Paul to the *Thessalonians*, which has already afforded matter for so many profitable remarks, let us recollect, that as *Christians*, we also are *appointed to afflictions*, by the experience of which our fitness for heaven and our relish for our everlasting rest are to be improved. It was faithful and kind in the *apostles*, after the example of their great Master, to give us such admonitions; but let us not be moved by the apprehension of any sufferings that may await us, for he who hath undertaken to support and defend us can make us *more than conquerors*; he can, even while we continue in this state of warfare, *establish our hearts unblameable in holiness*; and how blessed a connection will that have with our being *presented faultless* and blameless *before the presence of his glory*, when *Christ shall appear with all his saints*, and when the sanctity of each shall be a glory to their common Master, as well as an everlasting blessing to every one of those spotless souls! Ver. 3 4 13

Let the *ministers* of the gospel nobly rise above all attachment to secular views, and make it their great business to advance in their hearers such a temper. Let it be their *life*, to see those *Christian friends*, whom God hath committed to their care, *standing fast in the Lord*. And, if they have reason to *joy for their sakes before God*, let them render their *thanks to God* for it, and *night and day* be urgent in their *prayers* for them, that whatever comfort they have may be continued, and that whatever is *wanting in their faith* and their love, may be perfected, by the Divine blessing on *ministerial* labours. 8 10

SECT.

SECT. V.

The Apostle addresses several practical exhortations to the Thessalonians suitable to their circumstances, and particularly recommends chastity, justice, charity, and prudence. 1 Thes. IV. 1—12.

1 THESSALONIANS IV. 1.

SECT. V.

1 Thes. IV. 1.

AS for what remains therefore, my *brethren*, in subserviency to this important view, of being thus presented with all the saints before the great tribunal, in the perfection of holiness and happiness, *we* now *beseech* you, *and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you have received* repeated instructions *from us*, while we were among you, *how you ought to walk*[a], if you desire to adorn your profession, *and to please* and honour *God*, who hath bestowed upon you the favour of being called into it, *so ye would abound more and more*, labouring continually to advance in every amiable quality, and every Christian grace. I will not largely insist on these things now, *for ye know what commandments we gave you*, in the name and *on the part of the Lord Jesus*, whose servants we all profess ourselves to be, and whose authority we ought always to account sacred. Bear them constantly in your mind, and often charge on your souls the observance of them, *for this is the will of God* concerning you, [*even*] *your sanctification*; that as he hath chosen us from the rest of the world to be a people separate to his honour and service, we should not pollute ourselves with those abominations which are so common among the heathen, and particularly *that ye should abstain from fornication*, and all other kinds of lewdness so commonly practised among those who

1 THES. IV. 1.

FURTHERMORE then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort *you* by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us, how ye ought to walk, and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.

2 For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus.

3 For this is the will of God, *even* your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:

a *How you ought to walk*, &c.] The French Testament renders the words thus, "We entreat and conjure you by the Lord Jesus, to follow our instructions as to the manner in which you ought to live, in order to pleasing God, and that you would make continual progress in it." This is one specimen, among many, of the *paraphrastic* strain of this *version*, which changes the metaphorical expressions for phrases of a plainer nature equivalent to them: but, as the version I here give makes a part of a *paraphrase*, I thought it more convenient to keep nearer the original, though I have not made a point of giving what should be exactly a *verbal translation*. There is a medium between both, which I have at least attempted, and if I have not hit upon it, I hope it is not for want of diligence and care.

b *The*

SECT. V.

4 That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;

who are ignorant of the true religion: Whereas it is now the declared pleasure of the great Former of our souls and bodies, *that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel*, this animal frame, in which this immortal soul is lodged, as a rich and invaluable jewel in *sanctification and honour;* using his body as an instrument of service to God, to whom it has been solemnly consecrated; not as if it were intended as an organ to debase the mind by sensuality, which would surely be the most dishonourable view in which it can be considered. Walk *not* therefore any longer *in the lust of concupiscence*, contriving to indulge yourselves in gross and lascivious gratifications, *even as the heathens* do, *who know not God*[b], and are therefore ignorant of that pure and sublime happiness which arises from contemplating, adoring, and imitating him.

1 Thes. IV. 4.

5 Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:

5

6 That no *man* go beyond and defraud his brother in *any* matter: because that the Lord *is* the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you, and testified.

We have also told you, and we now repeat it, as an injunction of the greatest importance, that it is the will of God, *that no man should* in these, or any other matters, *over-reach, or defraud his brother in* [*any*] *affair*[c]. *For* though the fraud may be conducted in so artful a manner as to evade human conviction and punishment, yet it is most certain, that *the Lord* himself, the final and universal Judge, to whom we are all ere long to render up an account, [*is*] *the avenger of all such, as we also told you before, and testified* with all possible solemnity.

6

7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

For God hath not called us, in so extraordinary a manner, from the rest of the world, merely *to* a new name, or some different rites of external worship, while we are at liberty to indulge ourselves in *uncleanness*, as if we were patronized in the practice of it, merely by being numbered among Christians; *but*, as he is in himself perfectly holy, he hath called us *to* the love and practice of universal *holiness*, and would raise from

7

b *The heathens who know not God.*] Many have proved, by a variety of learned *quotations*, how much the *politest* nations among the ancients, and particularly the Greeks, were addicted to the most infamous kinds of *uncleanness;* and Dr. Whitby's *note* on this place may furnish out a catalogue, not to be read without a mixture of commiseration and horror.

c *Go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter.*] Many interpret this of *injuring their neighbour's bed*, taking the word πραγμα in an *ill* sense, as *Facinus* is used in Latin. This, no doubt, is included, but I see no reason for limiting the clause to such a sense. *Clean hands* in the *Old Testament* signifies those unpolluted with *bribes*, and therefore no certain argument against the more extensive signification I have preferred, can be drawn from the next clause.

d *He*

SECT. V.

from among the degenerate children of men a society, who, by the purity of their morals, should do an honour to the true religion, and approve themselves to be indeed the offspring of the Most High.

1 Thes. IV. 7.

8 In all these things we have faithfully delivered unto you the charge and message which we received upon the highest authority: *he therefore who despiseth* our testimony and admonitions, *despiseth not man* alone, *but God, who hath also given us his Holy Spirit*, and caused it to dwell within us, and to guide us in our discourses and writings, into the certain and infallible knowledge of his will[d].

8 He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit.

9 I have been large on some of the preceding articles, knowing how much you were addicted, in your heathen state, to some of the vices I have exhorted you to avoid. *But concerning brotherly love*, or that peculiar charity and affection which one Christian owes to another, *ye need not that I should* largely *write to you* now, *for ye yourselves are divinely taught to love one another.* God, dwelling in our nature, hath given you the example and the precept, with all possible advantage, and his Holy Spirit, descending on your hearts, forms and fashions them to this great law of love. *And indeed* I must do you the justice to say, by what I can learn of you, that *ye* actually *do it to all the* Christian *brethren which are in all Macedonia*, whether at Philippi, Apollonia, Amphipolis, Beræa, or elsewhere. *But we exhort you, brethren, that ye abound* in this benevolent and amiable disposition yet *more and more*, not only to those that are your own countrymen, but to all the children of our heavenly Father, however they may be dispersed in one part or another.

9 But as touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.

10 And indeed ye do it towards all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more;

11 *And*, while many indulge to an enterprizing temper, and are always undertaking some new design, to make themselves talked of, and to draw the eyes and observation of the world upon them, we advise you, *that you make it your ambition to live quietly* in the practice of those peaceful

11 And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with

d *He therefore who despiseth, &c.*] I will not here argue at large, how strongly this verse speaks the *inspiration of Paul* in what he wrote, and consequently that of the *sacred writers* in general; but I wish what I have said on this subject, in the *Essay on the Inspiration of the New Testament*, in the *eight volume* of this work, p. 342, &c. may be seriously considered, and that the important truth established in it, may be perpetually borne in mind by all my readers.

with your own hands, (as we commanded you;)

peaceful and humble virtues which suit the genius of Christianity, *and* particularly that you *do your proper business*[e]. *And*, as Providence hath placed most of you in such low circumstances of life, that you are obliged to maintain yourselves by your daily labour, we hope you will go on diligently and cheerfully to *work with your own hands* for that purpose, that you may not as idle drones become the burden of society, but rather may be able to do something for the support of your poorer brethren, *as* ye know *we gave it you in charge*, during the little time we resided amongst you. Attend to it therefore, *that so ye may walk decently toward those that are without* the inclosure of the church, and silence the clamours which the enemies of the gospel would be glad to raise against it, as making men idle and irregular; *and* [*that*] *you may have need of nothing*, but without being under a necessity of asking relief from them or any others, may be preserved from such degrees of extreme poverty as might expose you to their contempt, and into which frugal and industrious persons seldom fall, without some extraordinary Providence, which audibly and effectually bespeaks the compassion of their neighbours.

SECT. V.

1 Thess. IV. 11.

12 That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and *that* ye may have lack of nothing.

12

IMPROVEMENT.

WHO would not wish to be instructed in every thing which might conduce to our *walking so as to please God?* who would not delight in frequent exhortations, to *abound* in such a conduct *more and more*, that every day may improve upon the last, *till we perfect holiness in his fear?* Blessed be God the rules are *plain*, and our own conscience must bear witness to the *reasonableness and goodness of them. This is the will of God, even our sanctification;* that we should be honoured with his amiable image, and by sharing something of his *moral* character, may share something of that happiness which in the perfection of holiness he enjoys. He hath indeed given us a *compounded nature*, and hath appointed us for a time to struggle with its *animal* powers, that by a victory over them we may approve our duty and

Ver. 1 2 3

e *Do your proper business.*] This exhortation was peculiarly proper to the Thessalonians, as there seems to have been a meddling pragmatical temper prevailing among some of them, 2 Thes. iii. 11, which tended much to the reproach of their profession.—As to the emphasis of the word φιλοτιμεισθαι, compare 2 Cor. v. 9, and the *note*.

SECT. V.

and obedience, and be fitted for a *purer* happiness above than this low state of being will admit. Let *Christians* therefore learn
Ver. to *possess their vessels in sanctification and honour*, and not be cap-
4 tives to the mean *lusts of concupiscence* and uncleanness, as the *heathens*, who not having the *knowledge of God*, were more ex-
5 cusable than we in those indulgencies for which the knowledge of themselves and of their own *nature* would nevertheless, in some degree, condemn them.

Let us, as we dread the displeasure and *vengeance of God*, the supreme Guardian of the rights of his creatures, take heed that we do not allow ourselves, when it is most in our power, *to go beyond, or defraud our brethren in any matter*, but endeavour to shew, that we have indeed been *taught of God to love one ano-*
6 *ther*, and that we have received into our very hearts that *maxim* which our *gracious Redeemer* has given us, That we should *do*
9 *unto others as we would they should do unto us.* On this principle likewise, let us diligently *employ* ourselves in *our own proper affairs*, that instead of being the *burdens* of society, we may in our respective spheres be its *supports;* and, *quietly* attending to what lies within our own province, let us leave ambitious schemes
11 and projects to others, thinking ourselves happy enough, if we may be approved by *him* who hath allotted to the inhabitants of earth their *several* parts, and will another day accept and reward them, not according to the *distinction and elevation* of their stations, but according to the *integrity* with which they have behaved themselves in them. So shall we secure a testimony even in the consciences of *those that are without*, who would perhaps
12 ungenerously and unrighteously rejoice in an occasion of charging upon *the gospel of Christ* the follies and irregularities of its *professors*.

They will never be able to charge any thing on the *gospel itself* if they take their ideas of it from the *writings* of these its *authentic* teachers. And let it be remembered, that they gave
8 such abundant *evidence* of the authority with which they taught *that he who despiseth them despiseth not man, but God*, from whom they derived *the Spirit* by which they preached and wrote. His voice let us hear with reverence, his dictates let us humbly obey. The hour is near in which he will assert, the *honour* of his word, and demonstrate to all the world the *wisdom* of submitting to its dictates.

SECT.

SECT. VI.

The Apostle particularly sets himself to comfort his Christian friends, with relation to those that were fallen asleep in Jesus, by an animating view of that glory and happiness on which, at the general resurrection, they should enter in their complete persons. 1 Thes. IV. 13, *to the end.*

1 THESS. IV. 13.

BUT I would not have have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

1 THESSALONIANS IV. 13.

I HEAR it with concern, that since I have been separated from you, it hath pleased God to remove some dear and valuable members of your society, and I wonder not that you are tenderly affected with such a stroke. *But I would not have you ignorant* [a], my dear *brethren, concerning* the true state of *them that are* thus *fallen asleep* in the faith of Jesus, *that ye may not lament* with such unbounded transports and excessive forms of mourning, *as* are practised by *others*, even by your heathen neighbours, *who* are ignorant of God, and *have no* well-grounded *hope* [b] of an happy immortality, like that which in the gospel is imparted to you. *For* surely, *if we* do indeed *believe* those great and important doctrines which that Divine dispensation teaches us, *that Jesus*, the Son of God, *died* to expiate our sins, *and* that he *rose again* from the dead, that he might secure our final salvation, we may easily believe, that a scheme thus undertaken and prosecuted, shall not fail of its effect; but that, *in like manner also, God shall*

SECT. VI. — 1 Thess. IV. 13.

14 For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in

a *I would not have you ignorant,* &c.] Mons. Saurin, in his long and learned *criticism* on this *text*, which he thinks one of the hardest in the *New Testament (Sau. Ser.* Vol. VI. No. 1) gives it as his opinion, that the desire which prevailed in Christians to see Christ, when he should appear to judgment, made them lament those of their brethren who died as cut off from that hope. In reference to which he assures them, that they should be in that respect entirely on a level with those of their brethren who should *then be found alive.* But it may be queried, even on this *hypothesis*, why he does not directly tell them, that there was no particular room for such lamentations on this account as they themselves, and many succeeding generations, were to die before the *coming of our Lord.* He acknowledges that the *apostle* did not urge that, because he did not then exactly know whether Christ's appearance would be in that age, or at some much more remote distance of time. And this ignorance was certainly consistent with the knowledge of all that was necessary to the preaching of the gospel. Compare Mark xiii. 32.

b *As others who have no hope.*] *Tully* says (*Tusc. Disp.* i. 13,) "Who would lament the death of a friend, unless he supposed him deprived of all the enjoyments of life, and sensible of the loss of them?" How forcible a remark in the present connection! I see no reason at all to imagine, as some have done, that there is a reference to the notion of some *Jewish zealots*, that uncircumcised persons had no part in the *resurrection.* The *apostle's* argument is by no means levelled at such an apprehension, nor do I find any evidence that the church at Thessalonica was yet pestered with such corrupters of Christianity.

c *Who*

SECT. VI.

shall, by the exertion of that mighty power with which he hath clothed this triumphant Saviour, *bring with him*, in the train of his magnificent retinue, at his final appearance, all *those* of his faithful servants *who sleep in Jesus.* [c] As they died under the direction of his Providence, and committing themselves to his care, it shall in due time appear, that they are not lost, though they may have waited long for the consummation of their glory. *For this we* now *say to you, by the* express *word of the Lord* [d], on the authority of an immediate revelation from Christ himself, and not merely on our own conjecture, or wish, *that we*, that is, those of us Christians *who remain alive* [e] *at the coming of the Lord* to judgment, *shall not* so *prevent those who are asleep*, as to be glorified before them. *For the Lord himself*, our great and blessed Redeemer, arrayed in all his own glory, and that of his Father, *shall* in that great day *descend from heaven, with a* triumphant *shout*, raised by millions of

1 Thess. IV. 14.

in Jesus will God bring with him.

15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep.

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the

c *Who sleep in Jesus.*] The words διὰ τῦ Ἰησῦ, which we connect with κοιμηθέντας, and render *sleep in Jesus*, may be considered as making a separate *clause*, and may imply, that it is by the *power* and agency of *Christ* that God will bring with him those of his people that are departed out of this life. The phrase to express *sleeping in Christ*, is κοιμηθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ; compare ver. 16; 1 Cor. xv. 18. Archbishop *Tillotson* explains the expression here used, as appropriate to the *martyrs*, and renders διὰ τῦ Ἰησῦ, *for Jesus' sake*; but it cannot be proved that the grief to which the apostle refers, related only to such, and the force of the argument plainly reaches farther. *Tillotson's Works*, Vol. II. p. 184.

d *By the word of the Lord.* I think no words can more plainly assert that, in what follows, he speaks by an *express revelation from Christ*, and consequently there can be no room for any *interpretation* that can suppose him at all mistaken in any circumstance of the ensuing account.

e *We*, that is, those of us *who remain alive.*] This hath been interpreted by many, as an intimation, that the *apostle* expected to be found *alive at the day of judgment*; and on that interpretation, some have urged it as an instance of his entertaining, at least for a while, *mistaken* notions on that head, as if the *day of the Lord* were nearly approaching. But this is directly contrary to his own explication of the matter, 2 Thess. ii. 1, &c. as well as to other passages in which he expresses his expectation of death. Compare Phil. i. 20; and 1 Cor. vi. 14; 2 Cor. iv. 14; 2 Tim. iv. 6. Others have pleaded this *passage* in favour of that doctrine, which teaches the *resurrection* of some *most eminent saints*, before the main body of believers, and this, as most of the patrons of this scheme have explained it, in order to share with Christ in the glories and felicities of his *personal reign* upon earth. But to me it seems most natural to suppose that Paul here speaks as one of the Christian body, though he was not one of that particular number concerning whom he directly asserts, what is here said. Thus Hosea says (Hos. xii. 4,) *God spake with* us *in Bethel*; and the Psalmist, lxvi. 6, we *rejoiced*, that is, at the Red-sea when divided; and lxxxi. 5. I *heard a language* I *understood not*, that is, in Egypt, though neither were in existence at the times when the facts referred to happened. It is very unjust in *Orobio* to represent this as an artifice of the *apostle* to invite people to Christianity, by the expectation of being taken up alive to heaven in a very little time. *Lim. Col.* p. 75. His explication of this matter in the *next epistle* is abundantly sufficient to absolve him of all such suspicions, and indeed the sincerity that appeared in his whole conduct, evidently shews him to have been incapable of any such design. Compare *Lamothe on Insp.* p. 133–141.

f *With*

the dead in Christ shall rise first.

of happy attendant spirits. His appearance shall be proclaimed *with the voice of the* great *archangel*[f], *even with the trumpet of God,* which shall then sound louder than it did on mount Sinai when the law was given. *And the dead in Christ shall* all in a moment be awakened by it, and shall *rise* out of their graves in the *first* place[g], springing forth in forms of glory to the infinite astonishment, of the surviving world. SECT. VI. 1 Thess. IV. 16.

17 Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

And *afterwards we,* that is, those of us *who* *are left alive* at the time when this most awful and important day opens, *shall together with them,* by a mighty and instantaneous operation of the Divine power, *be snatched up into the clouds*[h], *in order to* our *meeting the Lord in the* region of the *air,* where his throne shall then be erected; and we, having been openly acknowledged and acquitted by him, shall be assessors with him in that judgment to which wicked men and angels are there to be brought forth; and when the final sentence is passed upon them, shall return to heaven, with our reascending Saviour, *and so shall we be with the Lord for ever,* and all share a blissful eternity in the sight and participation of his glory. 17

18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Therefore when your hearts are distressed with grief, for the loss of your pious friends, or on any other occasion which can arise in this mortal life, *comfort* yourselves and *one another with these words;* the tenor of which is so important, and the truth contained in them so certain, as being taught by the infallible dictates of the Spirit of God, and revealed to us by him, from whose fidelity, 18

f *With the voice of the archangel.*] I cannot think, with Mr. Pierce, that the *archangel is Christ himself,* so called as the great *ruler of angels.* There seems an evident impropriety in thus varying the expression, if it be only intended to say, that Christ shall shout as he descends; nor are the scriptures, to which this learned writer refers (*viz* 1 Sam. iii. 21; 1 Cor. i. 7, 8.) by any means parallel examples. See *Pierce* on Phil. ii. 9.

g *The dead in Christ shall rise first.*] It has generally been inferred from hence, that good men shall rise before the wicked, and 1 Cor. xv. 23, seems to favour it. But this *text* only asserts their rising, before the saints who are found alive shall be changed.

h *Caught up.*] Not, says Dr. *John Scott,* by the *ministry of angels* (*Christian Life,* Vol. III. p. 1204), but by the vigorous activity of our glorified body, which Mr. *Piggot* (Serm. ii. p. 67) supposes shall be refined to such a degree of spirituality as to be able to *tread air;* and Mr. *Whiston* has a notion analogous to it. (*App. to Boyle's Lect.*) I pretend not to determine on the *nicety* of questions like these. Only I cannot think the expression of being *caught,* or *snatched up,* suits the exertion of what shall then be a *natural* power; nor can I suppose that we shall have any thing to do with *air* in the state which is to succeed the great day, in which *the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved,* 2 Pet. iii. 12.

SECT. VI. fidelity, power, and grace, we expect this complete salvation [i].

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 18 O! who can be sufficiently thankful for the *strong consolations* which these *Divine* words administer! How many *drooping* hearts have been cheered by them in every age, while successively mourning over the pious dead! How often have we ourselves been driven to them, as to a sacred anchor, when our hearts have been overwhelmed within us, and if God continue us a few years longer, what repeated occasions may arise of flying to them again!

13 Let us charge it upon our hearts, that we do honour to our holy profession in every circumstance, and particularly in our *sorrows* as well as our *joys*. When providence is pleased to make such breaches upon us, let us not *sorrow as those who have no hope* for our deceased friends, or for ourselves. Surely we cannot doubt the very *first* and most *fundamental* articles of our faith, the *death*

14 and *resurrection* of *Jesus*, the Son of God; and if we do indeed assuredly believe these, what a blessed train of consequences will they draw after them! and this consequence most apparently, that *they who sleep in Jesus* shall not finally perish, but *shall be brought with him* to grace his triumph.

And O what a *triumph* shall that be! Let us now anticipate the joy with which, if true believers, we shall then *lift up our heads*, and *see our* complete *salvation drawing nigh*. What though we

15 die and moulder in the grave? the *saints then alive shall not prevent us:* though the last memorial of our names may long have perished from the earth, it shall appear that they are *written in*

16 *heaven*. And when the *Lord himself descends from heaven* with that earth-rending *shout*, when the *trump of God shall sound, his dead shall live*, like his dead body shall they revive; *they that dwell in the dust shall arise and sing, for his dew is as that falling upon herbs, and the earth shall cast forth its dead.* (Isa. xxvi. 19.)

But who can now conceive the rapture with which so many *millions* shall start up at once from their beds of dust, all arrayed in

16 robes of glory, and spurning the earth in which they have been so long intombed and all that is mortal and corruptible, shall soar aloft

[i] *As being taught, &c.*] The *MSS.* of New College in Oxford, and the Barbarine Library (No. 1 of each), add to λογοις τουτοις the words τω παρακαλουντι, *comfort one another with these words of the Spirit.* And though I see no reason to believe that addition *authentic*, yet, as the sense is just and right, I have expressed it in the *paraphrase*, as I often do in such cases; that if peradventure any thing that belonged to the *original* has been omitted in the received *copies* (which I hardly suspect,) the *reader* may one way or another meet with it.

a *Cometh*

aloft in one joyful company *with those who shall then be found alive, to meet the Lord in the air*, forming a mighty host, *bright as the sun, clear as the moon, and awful as an army with banners* (Cant. vi. 10); they shall soar to *meet their Lord*, attracted by Divine love, and borne on in their flight by an almighty power. We shall ascend to him, we shall be owned by him, we shall be seated near him; for *Christ who is our life shall appear*, therefore shall we *appear with him in glory;* (Col. iii. 4.) SECT. VI. 17

Nor shall it be merely the triumph of *one* day, or of any *limited* period, how long soever. It is the promise of his faithfulness and of his love, that *so we shall ever be with the Lord.* It is a glory that never shall decay, a *meeting* secure from all danger, from all possibility of future *separation.* In what circumstance of affliction shall not these *consolations* be felt? What torrent of tears shall they not be able to stop? What groans of distressed nature shall they not be sufficient to turn into songs of joy? *Thanks*, everlasting, ever new, ever growing thanks be *to God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ*, in the views of such a felicity! And let the whole choir of *saints*, the living and the dead, unite in one joyful *Amen.* 17 18

SECT. VII.

The Apostle strenuously exhorts the Thessalonians to a diligent preparation for that important day of Christ's appearance, of which he had been discoursing above. 1 Thess. V. 1—11.

1 THESS. V. 1.

BUT of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

1 THESSALONIANS V. 1.

SECT. VIII.

I HAVE told you that the solemn day of universal judgment will certainly come, and have been endeavouring to lead your minds to those views of it which must be most reviving to every true believer: *but concerning the* particular *times and seasons* of this grand event, with which the œconomy of providence in this world is to close, and some very wonderful occurrences which are to precede it, I am satisfied, my *brethren*, that *you have no need of my writing to you* accurately and largely. *For ye yourselves* do already *assuredly know*, as wherever we come, we make it one of our first doctrines, *that the* great *day of the Lord*, to which our eyes and hearts are so much directed, *comes just like a thief*[a] *in the night*, and will surprize the inhabitants 1 Thess. V. 1. 2

2 For yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night:

a *Cometh like a thief.*] Mr. *Blackwall* justly observes the remarkable *emphasis* of this *passage.* A *thief* comes upon people when they are bound in sleep, and they awake

SECT. VII.

bitants of the world in general by a dreadful alarm, when they are sleeping in the deepest
1 Thess. V. 3. security. *For when they shall* be most ready to *say*, All things about us are in perfect *peace and safety*, and no evil of any kind threatens us, *then sudden destruction shall come upon them*, and seize them as inevitably and painfully *as travail* comes *upon a woman with child*, whose days are accomplished, *and they shall not* be
4 able by any means to *escape* it. *But* I am persuaded that *you*, my *brethren*, *are not* sleeping *in darkness;* but *that*, as you have the light of the gospel shining around you, it is your desire to act so agreeably to its dictates and to maintain such a sense of the great and important prospect it opens upon you, as to have no reason to apprehend, that *the day* of which I speak, or the day of death, which shall consign you to its unalterable doom, *should come upon you as a thief*, or surprise you in an unprepared state.
5 For *ye are all* by profession, *the children of the light, and the children of the day*, as ye call yourselves Christians, and I trust are so, not in name only, but in truth. Since *we are not of the night, nor of darkness*, if we really answer our profession, by which we are so indispensably obliged, to endeavour to resemble the Divine Being in holiness, and to maintain a temper and conduct which should not fear examination and
6 discovery: Since this *therefore* is the case, *let us* answer the engagement, and *not sleep as the rest* of mankind [*do*]; *but let us watch and be sober*, that we may not be obnoxious to any un-
7 reasonable and unwelcome surprise. *For they who sleep*, generally choose to *sleep in the night, and they who are drunken*, if they have not quite outgrown all common sense of decency, *are drunken in the night;* whereas the day is the season of wakefulness, sobriety, and labour. Let us not therefore, by our negligent and dissolute behaviour, seem, as it were, to turn the
8 day into night. *But let us* Christians, *who*, as I said before, *are* the children *of the day, be sober*, and keep on our guard against our spiritual enemies, *putting on the breast-plate of faith and love*,

3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

6 Therefore let us not sleep as *do* others; but let us watch and be sober.

7 For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken, are drunken in the night.

8 But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breast-plate

awake in amazement and confusion, being found unarmed and in an helpless posture: *pangs* come upon a *woman*, when perhaps she is eating, drinking, or laughing, and thinks of nothing less than that hour. And here it is said, not that the day of the Lord *will come* thus, but that *it is actually coming*, which increases the awfulness of the representation. *Blackwall's Sac. Class.* Vol. I. p. 209.

b *Whether*

plate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

love, which will defend us against their mortal attacks; *and* [*for*] *an helmet, the* lively *hope of* that eternal *salvation* which God hath promised, and which, if rightly understood, may be abundantly sufficient to bear us through all the dangers which may lie in our way to it. SECT. vii. 1 Thess. V. 8.

9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath; but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.

And, blessed be God, there is room for arming ourselves with such an hope, *for God hath not*, as he justly might have done, *destined us to* bear for ever the final consequence of his *wrath*, to which our disobedience to him had rendered us obnoxious: *but* he hath been pleased to appoint us *to the obtaining of* that great *salvation* set before us in the gospel *by our Lord Jesus Christ*, who hath procured it for all true believers, and will assuredly at length bestow it upon them. 9

10 Who died for us; that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

Be therefore continually mindful of that compassionate Redeemer, *who* not only subjected himself to the many burdens and inconveniences of mortal life for our sakes, but even *died* in all the ignominy and agony of the cross *for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him*[b]; that while we live, or when we die, the life and happiness of our immortal souls should be secure, in an union to him which death itself shall never be able to dissolve. 10

11 Wherefore, comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

Therefore comfort yourselves and *one another* with the thoughts of this great salvation, *and edify each* to those continued improvements in the life of holiness, which may correspond to so glorious a hope. This is most apparently your duty, and, *as* I know many good and valuable things of you, I am *also* persuaded that *you do* indeed make conscience of it. 11

IMPROVEMENT.

SINCE we continually see so many around us *suddenly* surprised into the eternal world, and fixed in that state in which judgment will

[b] *Whether we wake or sleep*, &c.] Some interpret this still more *literally* than I have done, as if he had said, "Whether Christ comes in the night, when we are sleeping on our beds, or in the day, when we are awake, and busy in the pursuit of our common affairs." But as *sleeping* had just before been put for *death*, it seems more natural to interpret this clause, as speaking of the state of *believers*, whether *alive* or *dead*. And then I think it must contain a direct proof of the *life of the soul*, while the body is sleeping in the grave. God forbid, that any should understand these words, as intimating that Christ's death is intended to secure our salvation, whether we take any watchful care of it or not. Yet, alas, the generality of Christians live as if that were the genuine and only interpretation!

SECT. VII.

will find them, let us be very careful, that the *day of the Lord may not overtake us as a thief*, but that we maintain a continual *watch.*
4 How many are at this hour speaking *peace and safety* to themselves, over whose heads instantaneous *destruction* is hovering,
3 such a destruction that they shall never be able *to escape*, never able to recover from it!

Let us endeavour to awaken ourselves and each other. Are we
5 not indeed all *children of the day?* Let us rouse ourselves, and use the *light*, that by it we may dispatch our labours, and favoured by it, be guarded against the most sudden attacks of our spiritual
6 enemies. Let us be *sober and vigilant*, *lest our adversary the devil* break in upon us by a *surprise*, which the unexpected weapons by which he attacks us may render yet more dangerous.

8 Our own armour is described and provided, if we seek it from the *magazine* of God. Let *faith and love* ever defend our *breast.* Let the *hope of salvation* cover our head. Let us adore the Divine clemency and mercy, that we are not *appointed unto wrath*, but enjoy the views of such a *salvation*, to be *obtained by Jesus Christ.*
9 As he hath done his part to procure it for us, having *died* for this important purpose, let us exert ourselves to the utmost in our pro-
10 per sphere for securing it, *that we may lay hold on eternal life.* Then may we be happily indifferent to *life* or *death:* while we continue in the body; when *that* is *sleeping* in the grave and our souls remain in the invisible world; and when our sleeping dust shall be roused, and both soul and body live in unremitting vigour and energy, beyond the need of that repose which is now so necessary,—still in each of these different states we shall *live with him;* and he will make the progression of the soul from one state of *being* to another, its progression to stages of increasing *holiness* and *joy.*
11 In the persuasion of this, let us *comfort, exhort, and edify each other*, and we shall feel the energy of the exhortations we give, and the sweetness of the consolations we administer.

SECT. VIII.

The Apostle concludes his epistle with a variety of short practical exhortations and advices. 1 Thess. V. 12—*to the end.*

SECT. VIII.

1 Thess. V. 12.

1 THESSALONIANS V. 12.

1 Thes. V. 12.

I HAVE exhorted you to endeavour to comfort and edify one another, *but* I would not by this be understood as intimating, either that the proper work of your ministers is to be taken out of their hands, or that any slight is to be put upon them in the execution of it. On the contrary,

AND we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour

bour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;

trary, *we beseech you, brethren, to know*, to reverence, and respect *those that labour among you* in that important office, *and preside over you in* the name of *the Lord*[a]; whose business it is publicly to instruct you, *and* personally to *admonish you*, as occasion shall require. It is in love to his church, that Christ hath appointed such officers, and you will find the benefit of their assistance in the whole of your Christian course. I would therefore advise *and* charge you to *esteem them exceedingly in love, on the account of their work*, in which they are the representatives of him who is the great Shepherd of the sheep. [*And*] for their sakes as well as your own, let me farther press you to *be at peace with one another*, and to guard against the first risings of any thing which might alienate your affections; as it is impossible for you to conceive how much mischief might spring up in the society, from causes of this kind, which may seem in their beginnings too inconsiderable to be regarded. *And we* also *exhort you brethren*, that you would all in a proper manner concur with your pious ministers, overseers, and elders, in all proper acts of Christian discipline; and likewise that ye endeavour by private addresses, as Providence gives you an opportunity, to promote the interests of true religion in the hearts of each other. And in this view, *admonish them that are disorderly*[b], and unruly, neglecting and proudly refusing to keep the rank which God hath assigned them; *comfort the feeble minded*, whose courage and resolution is ready to fail them, under the many difficulties with which in present circumstances you are surrounded; *succour the weak* and infirm, whether in body or mind, and *be long-suffering toward all*, not ready to drive the justest censure to an excess,

SECT. viii.

1 Thes. V. 12.

13 And to esteem them very highly in love for their works sake. *And* be at peace among yourselves. 13

14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. 14

a *Preside over you*, &c.] Προισταμενους may signify those who *preside over your assemblies and moderate in them*. There were certainly many persons endowed with miraculous gifts in this *church*, and there might have been danger of great irregularities, such as prevailed in the church at Corinth (chap. v. 19—21), if some had not been appointed to *preside* over the rest during the time of public exercises. Such *officers* there also were in the Jewish synagogues, as is well known. Compare 1 Tim. v. 17. See *Bar. Misc.* Vol. I. p. 81—84, and the *note* on Heb. xiii. 17. But it is evident that *ministers*, by virtue of their general office, may be said to *preside* over Christian assemblies, even though there were no such peculiar need of their *interposition*, to moderate or direct the exercise of their gifts who were officiating in public.

b *Are disorderly.*] So ατακτοι is properly rendered. It is well known to be a *military* term, expressing the character of *soldiers* who keep not their *ranks*, and will not know their *colours*.

SECT. viii.

excess, till every softer and more gentle method has been tried. And whatever injury any of you may have received, whether from professed friends, or from avowed enemies, *see that no one render to any evil for evil, but always pursue that which is good;* endeavouring to the utmost to promote the happiness of all about you. Maintain this temper *both towards each other*, that is, towards all your fellow-Christians, *and towards all men*, not excepting your enemies and persecutors; sure by this means either to mollify their hearts, or at least to approve your own conduct in the sight of God, and to make whatever evil you suffer the occasion of obtaining from him blessings which will infinitely counterbalance it. And, in expectation of this, *be always rejoicing*[c], in the midst of your trials and afflictions, knowing that your complete redemption is approaching, and that in the mean time you have always the presence of your God and your Saviour, from which you may derive unutterable satisfaction and delight, sufficient to support you under all your sufferings. And, in order to maintain and improve this holy joy, *pray incessantly*[d]. Be constant in your stated devotions at their returning seasons, and endeavour to keep your minds habitually prepared for those pious ejaculations, which have so happy a tendency to promote the Christian temper, or for any sudden call you may have to address yourselves more solemnly to the Divine Majesty. And, whatever your circumstances may be, remember not only your dependence on God, but your obligation to him, and *in every thing give thanks;* since it is certain you can never be encompassed with such afflictions as not to have much greater cause of thankfulness than complaint. And this cheerful grateful spirit you should be concerned to maintain, *for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus, with regard to you* Christians; as by giving you his Son, and with him all the invaluable blessings of his covenant, he has laid a foundation

1 Thes. v. 15. 15 See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.

16 Rejoice evermore.

17 Pray without ceasing.

18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

c *Be always rejoicing.*] The words πανλοτε χαιρετε may express the form of a salutation, as if he had said, *may you always be prosperous and happy;* but, as they are put among so many other short exhortations, I think this *version* much preferable.

d *Pray incessantly.*] That is, *at all proper seasons.* So the burnt offering presented every morning and evening, is called *perpetual.* Lev. vi. 20. Compare Luke xxiv. 53, with Acts ii. 46, 47. See also John xviii. 20.

e *Quench*

tion for perpetual thankfulness, that may justly support the demand.

19 Quench not the Spirit.

Moreover, that this temper may be preserved in your minds, take heed that ye *quench not the* sacred flame of the Holy *Spirit* [e] in any of his influences, as you know it is his great office to excite and maintain every pious and devout affection in the soul. Especially be careful, that ye do not damp it, by indulging in any degree to a sensual or malevolent disposition, which must so naturally provoke him to withdraw both his gifts and his graces. And, as a regular attendance on Divine ordinances will greatly tend to cherish his influences, and a neglect of public worship proportionably obstruct them, *despise not* the holy exercises of *prophesyings* [f], in which the ministers of Christ interpret scripture by a singular inspiration, or speak to men by way of exhortation or comfort; but listen to them with reverence, and own the authority of God as speaking in his appointed messengers.

1 Thess. v. 19.

20 Despise not prophesyings.

20

21 Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.

Yet be upon your guard that ye are not imposed upon in an affair of so much importance, and take not every forward assertion for an oracle from God; but *try all things* with attention, examine the validity of the pretensions which are made to extraordinary inspiration, and when you have discussed them with impartiality and diligence, then resolutely *hold fast that which is good*, and be not prevailed upon to deny or reject it on any considerations.

21

22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.

Remember also, that in order to preserve your innocence, it will be necessary to guard against circumstances of strong temptation, and things concerning the lawfulness of which you may have just suspicion, though you cannot absolutely pronounce them to be criminal. I exhort you therefore, as you value your safety, to *abstain from all* that has so much as the *appearance of*

22

[e] *Quench not the Spirit.*] This has generally been expounded as referring to the *gifts of the Spirit*, the exercise of which in themselves or others should not be hindered. Compare 1 Tim. iv. 14, 1 Cor. xiv. 39. The phrase here used, according to some, particularly Lord *Barrington* (*Miscel. Sacr.* Vol. I. p. 140,) has a reference to the descent of the Spirit as in *flames of fire*, as he supposes there may also be in the word αναζωπυρειν, 2 Tim. i. 6. See the *note there.*

[f] *Despise not prophesyings.*] This caution as explained in the *paraphrase*, may perhaps intimate, that the neglect of a due regard to *phophesyings*, which some were too ready to despise, might be a means of blasting even those more splendid *gifts*, which they might be tempted to prefer to them.

SECT. VIII.

of evil, and from whatever may be likely to prove the occasion of sin.

1 Thess V. 23.

And while I thus urge you to proper diligence and caution on your part, I join to my counsels my most ardent and affectionate prayers for you. *May the God of peace himself*, that God who hath now reconciled us, and is become the source of all prosperity and happiness, *sanctify you entirely*, in all the parts of your nature; *and* [*I pray God that*] *your whole constitution*, or frame, your rational *spirit*, your animal *soul*, *and* your *body* [g], animated by it, *may be* so *kept blameless*, by Divine grace now, as *to* be presented with the greatest honour and acceptance at *the appearance* of *our Lord Jesus Christ*, whensoever it shall be. This I desire, and cheerfully hope it, for *faithful* [*is*] *he who hath called you* to the Christian faith, *who also will do* this; since [*it*] is what he has graciously promised to all true believers, whom he hath committed to the care of Christ, as their Shepherd, who will give them eternal life, and will raise them up in the last day.

23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and *I pray God* your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

24 Faithful *is* he that calleth you, who also will do *it*.

This is the glorious gospel we preach, and that we may be successful in preaching it, I entreat you, *brethren*, to *pray for us*; for we greatly need and greatly value the prayers of our fellow Christians. And when ye assemble together, in token of your mutual affection, and agreeably to the custom which hath long prevailed, *salute all the brethren* present *with an holy kiss;* and let the sisters in like manner salute each other, taking care to conduct this action with the strictest modesty and propriety. As I write these things, not merely for the perusal of this or that particular friend into whose hands they may first fall, but for general use, and, as the importance of them is very great, *I adjure you*

25 Brethren, pray for us.

26 Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.

27 I charge you by the Lord, that this epistle

g *Your whole constitution*, &c.] I wish I had known better how to render ολοκληρον υμων, which being followed by το πνευμα η ψυχη, &c. ought not, as in our *versions*, to be rendered as an *adjective* to the first. It signifies the *whole frame* of nature allotted to you. It it very evident, that the apostle, in the following words, refers to a notion which, as the learned *Vitringa* has very accurately shewn, (*Vitr. Obs.* lib. cap. iii. 4,) prevailed among the *rabbies* as well as the *philosophers*, that the person of a man was constituted of *three distinct substances*, the *rational spirit*, the *animal soul*, and the visible *body*. He seems to suppose, from Heb. iv. 12, the two former may be separated; and some have thought that he intimates, 1 Cor. xiv. 14, 15, that *one* may know what the *other* does not. This is not a place to state or examine this *notion* at large; it certainly derives great weight from this text. My curious readers may consult, besides the *commentators*, *Hallet on Script.* Vol. I. p. 39, &c.

pistle be read unto all the holy brethren.

you, by the authority of our *Lord* Jesus Christ, committed to me, *that this epistle be read to all the holy brethren* of your church, at some time when you are all gathered together for Divine worship. And, that you may be sure it is genuine, I add with my own hand my general benediction. *May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ* [*be*] always *with you*, to support that principle of true Christianity which he hath implanted in your souls, till the purposes of his love be completed in your everlasting salvation. *Amen.*

SECT. viii.

1 Thes. V. 17.

28 The grace our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you, Amen. 28

IMPROVEMENT.

WHAT a variety of excellent instructions does this *short section* contain! yea, how much is expressed in some of its shortest sentences! But how hard is it for our degenerate hearts to learn these lessons which so few words are sufficient to express! This habitual *joy* in God, this constant disposition to *prayer*, this *thankful* temper, that upon every call may overflow in thanksgiving, *this abstinence from every appearance of evil.* "*Blessed Lord!* we need a better spirit than our own to teach us these things. May thy *grace be with us*, and may none of us *quench the Spirit*, nor *despise* those *ordinances* which by his heavenly communications he so often owns!" Let us endeavour, by the daily importunity of *prayer*, to engage more of his efficacious and purifying influences, *to sanctify the whole frame* of our nature, *our spirits, our souls, and our bodies;* that we may so understand and choose, so love and delight in Divine things, and maintain so regular and constant a command over our appetites of flesh and blood, and all the irregular propensities of animal nature, that we may be continually fit for the *appearance of Christ*, and be more like what we hope we shall be, *when presented before the presence of his glory.*

Ver. 16 17 18 19 20

To promote this, let us *watch over one another* in the Lord. Let *Christian* societies preserve a regular *discipline*, with a due mixture of zeal and tenderness. Let the friendship of private persons be rendered mutually subservient to *religious* improvement, and let a due regard be ever paid to those who *labour among them, and preside over them in the Lord.* They will not require a *blind* submission to their dictates, if they rightly understand the gospel they are to teach. They will *allow*, they will *encourage*, they will *urge* their hearers *to prove all things*, which even the *apostles* themselves, with all their *plenitude of inspiration*, did not think it beneath them to do. But they who thus candidly enquire, and

14 12 21

are

SECT. VIII.

Ver.

are determined to *hold fast what is truly good*, knowing how excellent an office the *ministry is*, knowing how much the edification of the *church* depends upon it, will *esteem those* that bear it *very highly in love, for their work's sake*, and in whatever instances they may be constrained, by what they judge to be the evidence of truth, to differ from their *brethren*, or even from their
13 *teachers*, will be solicitous to maintain *harmony and love* in the societies to which they belong, as it becomes them to do who are the disciples of that *wisdom from above*, which hath taught them inseparably to connect their regards to *purity and peace*.

THE END OF THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR ON THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR,

A PARAPHRASE

ON

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO THE

THESSALONIANS.

WITH

CRITICAL NOTES, AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.

A

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

IT has been already observed, that the *first epistle* to the Thessalonians was written from Corinth, about the year of own Lord 52; and as Timothy and Silas appear, from the inscription of this *second epistle*, to have been still with the *apostle*, it has generally been concluded, that he wrote it while he continued in the same city, and not long after the former. See Vol. VIII. § 41, *note* [i].

The general design of it is to confirm the Thessalonians in their Christian profession, and to comfort them under the sufferings to which they were exposed. Besides which the *apostle* sets himself to rectify some mistaken apprehensions they seem to have entertained about the coming of Christ; and to direct them in the exercise of Christian discipline towards some irregular members of the society.

This *epistle* (which, like the former, bears St. Paul's name, with those of Timothy and Silas, in the inscription) begins with a devout acknowledgment to God, for the eminent attainments which the Thessalonians had made in religion, and particularly for the zeal and fidelity with which they adhered to the Christian cause in the midst of persecution. To support and animate them under their trials, the *apostle* reminds them of the distinguished honour that would be conferred on all the *saints*, at the coming of Christ, and the vengeance that would at the same time overtake all the *enemies* of the gospel, assuring them of his constant prayers for their farther improvement in the Christian character, in order to their attaining the felicity that was promised: Chap. i. *throughout*.—But, lest by mistaking the meaning of what he had said or wrote to them at any time upon that subject, or by any other means they should be deceived into an opinion that the judgment-day was near at hand, he informs them, that before this awful period there would be a grand apostacy in the church, and

an antichristian power, which he calls the *man of sin*, would arise, and greatly obstruct the progress of the gospel, arrogantly assuming to itself the Divine authority, and by pretended miracles leading multitudes into the grossest and most fatal delusions. Some beginnings of this spirit he observes were already discoverable, and as soon as those restraints which then lay upon it were removed, it would break out in all its force, and continue to spread its malignant influence, till it should be finally destroyed by the coming of Christ: Chap. ii. 1—12. These views lead him to express his thankfulness to God, that the Thessalonians had escaped this corruption which began so early to prevail in the church, and had given such proof of their entering into the true spirit and genius of Christianity, by the happy effect their belief had produced upon their lives and characters. But lest they should think themselves secure, he exhorts them to stedfastness and constancy in their profession of the truth, and adds his earnest supplication for their increasing comfort and establishment. At the same time he desires their prayers that his labours might be attended with the same success amongst *others* as they had been amongst *them*; and that he might be delivered from the opposition that was made to him by *unreasonable men*, expressing withal his cheerful confidence in their continued regards to the instructions he had given them, ver. 13.—Chap. iii. 1—5.

The *apostle*, having borne so honourable a testimony to the character of the Thessalonians in general, proceeds to give them directions for their conduct towards some irregular members of the society, and charges them to withdraw themselves from those that behaved disorderly, and neglecting the proper business of their calling, busied themselves impertinently in the concerns of others. He exhorts such to attend to their own affairs, and carefully to provide for their own subsistence, that they might not be a burden to others. And to add greater weight to his admonitions, he reminds them of the example he had set them while at Thessalonica, in maintaining himself by the labour of his own hands, though, considering his character as an *apostle*, he had certainly a right to have been supported at their expence. If any one notwithstanding should refuse to comply with this exhortation, or with those he had given them in his former epistle, he directs his Christian friends to exclude him from their familiarity and friendship, that he might be made sensible of his fault; yet he advises them to treat him not as an enemy, but to admonish him as a brother. The apostle having thus sufficiently instructed the Thessalonians in their duty on this important article, concludes with his usual salutation, written with his own hand verse 6, *to the end.*

The attentive reader will easily perceive that this, though the shortest of all St. *Paul's epistles* to the *churches*, is not inferior to any of them, in the sublimity of the sentiments, and in that excellent spirit by which all the writings of the *apostle* are distinguished. Besides those marks of its genuineness and Divine authority, which it bears in common with the rest of these *epistles*, it has *one* peculiar

peculiar to itself, from the exact representation it contains of the *papal* power, under the characters of the *man of sin*, and the *mystery of iniquity*. For, considering how directly opposite the principles here described were to the genius of Christianity, it must have appeared, at the time when this *epistle* was written, highly improbable to all *human* apprehension, that they should ever have prevailed in the Christian *church;* and consequently a prediction like this, which answers so exactly in every particular to the event, must be allowed to carry its own evidence along with it, and to prove that the author of it wrote under a *Divine* influence. For a farther illustration of this argument, see Dr. *Benson's Dissertation on the Man of Sin.*

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO THE

THESSALONIANS.

SECT. I.

The Apostle expresses his joy in the constancy with which the Thessalonians adhered to the Christian cause, and animates them against the persecutions to which they were still exposed, by the prospect of that glory that would be conferred upon them at the coming of Christ. 2 Thess. I. *throughout.*

2 THESS. I. 1.

PAUL, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians, in God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ:

2 THESSALONIANS I. 1.

PAUL and Sylvanus, or Silas, *and Timothy*, being still continued together, renew the address we formerly made *to the church of the Thessalonians*; which is now by Divine goodness *in* a state of union and friendship with *God, our* great and ever-blessed *Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ:* having been so happy as some time since to receive the gospel, and still to retain the profession of it. And we must now, as before, express that sincere benevolence, which reigns in all our hearts towards you, by wishing, as we then did, the communication of *grace to you, and* abundance of *peace*, tranquillity and happiness, *from God our Father, and* from *the Lord Jesus Christ.*

SECT. I.

2 THESS. I. 1.

2 Grace unto you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2

3 We are bound to thank God always for you

We sincerely sympathize with you in all your trials, yet we are sensible, that *we ought always* 3

to

SECT. i.

to give thanks to God on your account, brethren, as it is fit and reasonable, *because your faith,* 2 Thes. I. 3. notwithstanding all that is done to blast it and trample it down, *groweth exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all towards one another aboundeth* more and more; your faith drawing new confirmation from your sufferings, and your sense of them engaging you tenderly to pity, and to do your utmost for the relief of those who share in them, and at the same time endearing to you that one body which the world so cruelly hates, and so maliciously endeavours to
4 destroy. And these good dispositions are, through the Divine grace, *so* remarkable in you, *that we do ourselves* indeed *boast of you in* all *the churches of God* to whom we come, *on account of your* unwearied *patience and* lively unshaken *faith in* the midst of *all your persecutions, and* the various *tribulations* of one kind and another
5 *which you endure:* [*Which shall,*] on the whole appear to [*be*] so far from proving inconsistent with the honour of the Divine government, that, on the contrary, they shall terminate in *a* glorious and advancing *display of the righteous judgment of God* [a], *that ye may be approved* in some degree *worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer;* that ye may appear by these trials to be possessed of integrity and patience, of such meekness and superiority to this transitory world, as to be fit for those seats of superior dignity and blessedness on which you are to
6 enter. It shall also be the means of displaying the Divine justice, in the punishment to be inflicted on your implacable enemies; *for* [*it is*] *a* most *righteous* and honourable *thing with God to repay tribulation to them who bring tribulation on you,* accounting with them in the great day for all the evils they have inflicted on you unprovoked, and while you were engaged in the
7 most equitable and benevolent cause. *And,* on the other hand, it will appear equally suitable to the honour of the Divine government, to repay *unto you who suffer* this *tribulation rest with us,* if not in the present world, where we do

you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all towards each other aboundeth:

4 So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God, for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:

5 *Which is* a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:

6 Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus

a *A display,* &c.] Perhaps ενδειγμα may farther imply, that the sufferings of good men, and the triumphant prosperity of their persecuting enemies, should not only *terminate* in such a *display* of Divine vengeance, but that these seeming irregularities do even *now* declare, that there shall be such a day of retribution.

b *From*

sus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels,

do not ourselves expect it, yet at last *in the revelation of the Lord Jesus* Christ *from heaven, with his mighty angels*, who shall be the ministers of his power in the execution of his great and awful judgment. And nothing can be more comfortable to the persecuted saint, than to think of this illustrious appearance, when Jesus shall descend in his Father's glory and his own, surrounded *with flaming fire, to execute vengeance on those who know not God*, but presumptuously neglect and despise the intimations, yea and the express declarations of his will, with which he has favoured them; *and* especially to inflict deserved punishment upon *those who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*, though they have received it in all its evidence. SECT. i. 2 Thess. I. 7.

8 In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ;

8

9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

They *who* add the rejection of that to all their other crimes, can expect neither remedy nor mercy, but *shall* assuredly *be punished* [*with*] *eternal destruction*, which shall, as it were, break forth like lightning upon them, *from the face of the Lord*[b], *and* drive them *from* his presence, as it will be utterly impossible for them to stand against *his glorious power*, which will be armed for their ruin, and shine forth with irresistible brightness and majesty, *When he shall come to be glorified in* the full assembly *his saints, and to be admired*[c] *in* the efforts of his almighty power and love, for the complete salvation of *all them who believe.* They shall be accomplished *in that* glorious *day*, to which our faith and hope have been so long directed, and in which the promises of his covenant do so remarkably centre. It is the hope and joy of all his people, and it is yours in particular; *because our testimony among you was credited*, and you have given substantial evidences, that your faith was cordial and sincere. *In which regard*, as we rejoice in what is already done, and have the tenderest concern that the precious seed we have sown may answer the hope with which we see it

9

10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day:

10

11 Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy

11

b *From the face of the Lord.*] Bishop *Hopkins* has justly observed (*Hopkins' Works*, p. 370), that this *phrase* expresses, not only that they shall be *expelled* from that joy and glory which reigns in the presence of Christ, but that his *presence* shall appear *active* in the infliction of their punishment, so that they shall, as it were, be blasted by the lightning of his eye.

c *To be admired.*] This strongly implies, not only that the *saints themselves* shall *admire* at what he does for them, so far above all their expectations and conceptions, but that it shall *reflect* an admirable *glory* upon our Redeemer, in the judgment of all who shall be spectators of it.

d *Good*

SECT. i.

it springing up, and at length advance to full maturity, *we* continue to *pray always for you,*
2 Thes. i. 11. *that our God would,* by the working of his grace, *render you* more and more *worthy of* [*this*] high and holy *calling, and* would *fulfil* in you *all the good pleasure of* [*his*] *goodness* [d], all that amiable and happy temper, which his paternal regard to our happiness engages him to recommend and require. *And* to speak all in one word, that he would accomplish and perfect *the work of faith with power,* that is, would powerfully impress upon your hearts the great principles of that religion which he hath revealed to you, and which you have embraced; since nothing can tend more effectually to produce and nourish every good disposition in your mind.

thy of *this* calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of *his* goodness, and the work of faith with power:

12 *That* so *the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you,* while you act in a manner so suitably to the relation you bear to him: *and* that *you* may also be glorified *in him,* may now have the honour of approving yourselves his faithful servants, the excellent of the earth, and may for ever share in the glory he hath prepared for such; *according to the grace of our* merciful *God, and* of *the Lord Jesus Christ,* by whom it is so plentifully bestowed upon us.

12 That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 12 How wisely has the *apostle* chosen the representation we have now been reading, to promote the *glory* of our *Saviour's* name, by strengthening the *saints* who are already established, and awakening any who might be careless and irregular, by the very same considerations, which may so justly awe and intimidate the *enemies* of the church! How forcible in all these views is the description we here read, of the glorious and triumphant *appearance of our Lord!* Let it be ever placed before our eyes. He shall surely *come in flaming fire, to take vengeance* on all his enemies. 6 The *troublers* and persecutors of his people shall have their peculiar share in it, and it is most *righteous with God* that they should. Yet

d *Good pleasure of his goodness.*] Mr. *Blackwall* would render it *the benevolence* of his goodness, and says, it is the shortest and most charming representation any where to be found, of that *infinite goodness* which surpasses all expression, but was never so happily and properly expressed as here. *Blackwall's Sac. Class.* vol. I. p. 242. We may add, that ευδοκια seems at once to express, that it is *sovereign pleasure,* and also that he feels, as it were, a *sacred complacency* in the display of it. And for that reason I chose rather to retain, with our received version, *good pleasure,* than to substitute the word *benevolence* in its stead.

a *The*

Yet it is not intended for them alone, but for all who *know not* SECT. i.
God, and who obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ. How diligently
should we examine, what our knowledge of God is, and what our 8
obedience to his gospel! whether the one be merely speculative,
and the other verbal, or our knowledge practical, and our obedi- 9
ence sincere and universal! *Everlasting destruction from the pre-*
sence of the Lord, and the glory of his power, is a vengeance dread-
ful enough, one would imagine, to awaken even by its distant
sound, all who are not sunk into the last and lowest degrees of
insensibility. *Who can stand in his presence when once he is an-*
gry? Who can resist his power? But there are a happy number, 10
who shall be *glorified* by him and, which should give us peculiar
joy, in whom he also *shall be admired and glorified, in that day*
and for ever. The holy and blessed creation of God shall see to
all eternity, from what ruin *Jesus* could raise, and to what feli-
city he could exalt, those who were once the captives of Sa-
tan, the slaves of sin, and the heirs of death and hell. May
the expectation of it influence our hearts in a suitable man-
ner! May all the *good pleasure of God's goodness be fulfilled in us,* 11
and the work of faith with power! Then while our *faith groweth* 3
exceedingly, our mutual *love* will *abound*, our *patience* will be ade- 4
quate to every trial, and we shall be *approved*, as in some mea-
sure, through Divine grace, *worthy of that kingdom* to which God 5
hath called us.

SECT. II.

Paul cautions the Thessalonians against expecting the day of judg-
ment immediately, and foretels the appearance of antichrist that
was first to come. 2 Thess. II. 1—12.

2 THES. II. 1.

NOW we beseech you, brethren by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *by* our gathering together unto him,

2 THESSALONIANS II. 1. SECT. ii.

I SPOKE in my former letter of the coming of Christ, and I have just been mentioning it to you again; *but* I am afraid you should misunderstand what I have written upon that subject, and therefore *I* must *beseech you, brethren, with respect to the* intended and much desired *appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ*[a], *and our gathering* 2 Thess. II. 1.

a *The appearance of our Lord.*] Cradock would render υπερ της παρουσιας, *concerning the appearances*, as if he had said, with relation to what I wrote in the former *epistle* of *Christ's coming*, and our *being caught up in the air to meet him* (compare 1 Thes. iv. 17), supposing υπερ to be used for περι here, as it certainly is, 1 Cor. viii. 23; and *Vitringa (Observ.* lib. i. cap. vi. § 6) has said so much to vindicate it, that I could not but prefer this rendering. Mr. *Howe* takes it as we do in our translation, and

SECT. ii.

thering together unto him, of which I then spoke,
That ye be not soon moved from [*the steadiness of*
2 Thess. II. 2. *your*] *mind, nor troubled, either by the* suggestion of any pretended *spirit* of prophecy and revelation in others, *or by* the report of any *word*, which we may be said to have dropped, *or by* the sense which any may put upon what we have written in the former *epistle*, which you have really received, or any other which may be brought to you, *as from us, as if the* great *day of Christ were* just *at hand*[b], and to be continu-
3 ally looked for. *Let no man deceive you by any means* which he may use so as to persuade you of this, lest finding yourselves mistaken in that expectation, you should be brought to doubt of the faith you have received, or in apprehension of so speedy a dissolution of the world, you should be less attentive to some of its concerns than duty or prudence will require. *For* you may be assured, with respect to this great and important day, that [*it shall not come*] *till there come first an* amazing and shameful *apostacy*[c] in the Christian church itself; *and the man of sin be revealed*, that antichristian power, which is to raise itself by such enormous mischiefs; yet it is so surely doomed to destruction, by the just though long delayed vengeance of God, that I cannot forbear calling him that assumes it, *the son of perdition*, as our Lord himself called Judas the traitor (John xvii. 12);
4 I now speak of one *who opposes* himself to the interest of true religion, by arts and enterprises in former generations unknown, *and*, as pride often

2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come* except there come a falling-away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition:

4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or

and speaks of it as the most *solemn adjuration* in the Bible (*Howe on the Spirit*, vol. II. p. 70); and then shews how pernicious the consequences of that *error* might have been, which the *apostle* endeavours so solicitously to guard against.

b *The day of Christ were at hand.*] Yet it was what the *primitive Christians* confidently expected, and some tell us, they were the more desirous of *martyrdom*, that they might not be spectators of so dreadful a scene as they supposed it would be. See *Reeve's Apol.* vol. I. p. 30. But if it really were so, it was an instance of a double mistake in these good men.

c *An apostacy.*] Dr. Whitby understands this, either of the revolt from the Romans, or the falling away of many Christian converts to Judaism, through prejudices in favour of the perpetuity of the Mosaic law, or expectations of the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, or the fear of persecution; on each of which topics he enlarges with great propriety. And *Vitringa* is large in shewing, that great *apostacy* prevailed in the Christian church, between the days of Nero and Trajan. (*Observ.* lib. iv. cap. 7.) Yet I have thought it my duty to explain this difficult but important context, as referring to what Mr. *Joseph Mede*, with so great propriety, calls *the apostacy of the latter times*, and I must refer to his learned and judicious writings on this head, and to Dr. *Benson's Dissertation on the Man of Sin*, to vindicate the reasonableness of an *interpretation* which I have by no means room to discuss at large.

SECT. ii.

2 Thess. II. 4.

or that is worshipped: so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

often goes before destruction, insolently *exalts himself above all that is called God, or the object of* religious *worship* [d], taking upon him to controul Divine institutions, and to model every thing according to his own arrogant pleasure. *So that he himself, as God, sets himself in* the church, which is *the temple of God, shewing himself* with such pompous parade, and such despotic authority asumed over the consciences of men, that so far as actions can speak, he in effect asserts, *that he is God,* nothing human, and indeed nothing created, having a right so to dictate.

5 Remember ye not that when I was yet with you, I told you these things.

This is an event of so great importance, that I have formerly mentioned it. *Remember ye not, that being yet with you,* though I spent so very little time among you, *I* nevertheless *told you these things,* and gave you such warnings concerning them as I imagined you could not so soon have forgot? 5

6 And now ye know what with-holdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

And now, though it is a tender subject, which it is not convenient to speak of in too explicit a manner, I persuade myself, that *ye know what restrains him from being revealed in* (what otherwise might seem) *his own time.* 6

7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth, *will let,* until

For the mystery of iniquity, the hidden design of corrupting and overthrowing Christ's kingdom, which has so many artful ways of insinuating itself into the minds of sinful men, and of introducing its own tyrannical, avaricious, and ambitious schemes into the church, *does already* in some measure *work* [e], amidst 7

d *Above all that is called God,* &c.] The usurpation of the *papacy* in Divine things is so unequalled, that if these words are not applicable to it, it is difficult to say, who there ever has been, or can be, to whom they should belong. The manner in which the pope has exalted himself above *magistrates* is equally remarkable and detestable; but I do not apprehend it so immediately referred to here, as his taking upon him to controul every thing in *religion.* Σεβασμα has exactly the signification here given it. See Acts xvii. 23.

e *The mystery of iniquity doth already work.*] As Dr. Whitby explains the *man of sin,* of the *rebellious* and *unbelieving Jews,* he must of course explain this, of the turbulent and seditious principles which evidently prevailed among them; and it is agreeable to his scheme to interpret the impediment spoken of in the next clause, of Claudius Cesar, whose favours obliged them so, that they could not immediately break out, but who was soon taken away by a violent death, which gave them the opportunity they seemed so much to wish for. See *Whitby in loc.* But it appears much more reasonable to understand the *passage* before us of the *antichristian spirit* which began to work in the Christian church then, in the pride and ambition of some ministers, the factious temper of many Christians, the corruption of many Christian doctrines, the imposing unauthorised severities, the worship of angels, &c. of all which things the *papacy,* availed itself, for acquiring and exercising its iniquitous dominion; and *so he that hindereth* will refer to the *imperial power,* of which we shall presently speak, but of which prudence obliged St. Paul to write with a caution, which unavoidably occasioned some obscurity.

f *There*

SECT. ii. amidst all the peculiar engagements to the most humble, disinterested, and upright conduct, which an age and ecclesiastical state like ours brings along with it. *Only there is one that hindereth, till he be taken out of the way* [f], secular powers at present are a restraint, but when that is taken away, and different scenes in Providence open, these iniquitous principles, that are secretly fermenting, will break out in all their force. *And then the ungodly one shall be revealed*, and appear as it were unveiled in all his native deformity; even he who shall bring the greatest infamy and the greatest misery on the Christian world. Nevertheless, though his reign may be of some considerable duration, it shall not be perpetual; for the Spirit teaches us to regard him as sentenced to inevitable ruin, as one *whom the Lord will* certainly at length *destroy*; and how firmly soever he may seem established *by* human policy and power, he shall find himself unable to withstand *the breath of his mouth*, which shall kindle all around him a consuming flame, in which all his pomp and pride shall vanish. *And* indeed he will not only in some measure humble and abase, but utterly eradicate and *abolish* him, *by the* resplendent *brightness of his coming*, when truth shall beam in upon mens' minds with all its energy, and its most formidable enemies shall fall before it.

2 Thess. II. 7. until he be taken out of the way.

8 And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

9 In the mean time, the monster of iniquity shall prevail, [*even he*] *whose coming is according to the energy of Satan*, whose interest he shall re-establish, where it seems to be overthrown. That malignant and deceitful spirit shall therefore endeavour to promote this antichristian kingdom to the utmost, *by all lying power, and signs, and wonders* [g], by a variety of fictitious miracles, so artfully contrived and so strongly supported by an abundance of false testimonies that

9 *Even him* whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs, and lying wonders,

[f] *There is one that hindereth*, &c.] Dr. Geddes very properly explains this of the *Romam emperor*, who would not suffer *ecclesiastical* power to grow to an exorbitant height, while he held his seat at Rome. See *Geddes' Tracts*, vol. ii. p. 10. and as many good modern *commentators* give it the same turn, so it is observable that *Tertullian*, *Augustine*, *Chrysostom*, all agree in saying, that *antichrist* was not to appear till after the fall of the *Roman empire*. See Archbishop *Tillotson*, vol. II. p. 193.

[g] *Lying powers signs and wonders.*] It is certain that the construction will very well allow us to refer ψευδους to all the preceding words, as well as the last; and nothing seems so natural as to refer the whole to the *fictitious miracles of the church of Rome*, which have grown up to such a degree of extravagance and effrontery, as even to make their own popes ashamed.

[h] *Energy*

that many shall be entangled, deceived, and undone by them. SECT. ii.

10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish: because they received not the love of the truth, that that they might be saved.

And, in the conduct of this most iniquitous design, recourse will be had to *all manner of unrighteous deceit*, which shall be managed with the utmost art and address, *among those* wretches, *who shall* many of them finally *perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved* by it, but preferred those secular views which such dishonest practices promoted, to the great prospects of their everlasting happiness in an invisible world. *And for this* 11 *cause*, when they have for a limited time been permitted to trifle with the message of his mercy and the strivings of his Spirit, *God will* in righteous judgment give them up to a reprobate and insensible mind, and will *send upon them the energy of deceit* [h]; he will suffer them to deceive others, till they are deceived themselves too; *so that they shall believe the lie* which they have so long taught: *They that may all be* 12 *condemned* at last, *who believed not the truth*, though offered to them with sufficient evidence, *but*, on the contrary, *had pleasure in unrighteousness* [i], and imposture, when it might serve their present interest, to which all considerations of conscience and honour, religion, and future hope, were sacrificed. And this I leave upon record, that such as are not entirely incorrigible, may be alarmed by this dreadful representation, and that others may be warned to stand at the remotest distance from the tents of these wicked men, and though it should be at the greatest hazard, to maintain the cause of God and of truth against them.

2 Thes. II. 10.

11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie;

12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

IMPROVE-

h *Energy of deceit.*] Those most ridiculous *popish legends*, which have yet gained such credit as to be admitted into their *public offices*, furnish out a most affecting *comment* upon these words.

i *Had pleasure in unrighteousness.*] I cannot but think this refers to many of the *priests* and others in the *Romish church*, who impose on the people *known* delusions, merely out of regard to *secular* interest; and it wears so dreadful an aspect on such, and on those, who on the like principles, act the same part in the protestant world, if such there be, that I cannot but hope it may be the means of producing in time some great *reformation*, when it shall please God powerfully to impress on the professed *teachers* of others a serious sense of the importance of *their* own salvation, and to make them feel how contemptible all worldly emoluments are, when compared with *truth* of doctrine and *purity* of worship and discipline.

k *Divine*

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. ii. LET us behold with humble reverence the depths of the Divine counsels and judgments: God hath been pleased to suffer the craft of *Satan* to display itself, in reducing from his allegiance a great part of the Christian world, yet has he *taken the wise in his own craftiness*, so far as to make that very *apostacy* from Christianity an additional proof of its Divine original. Who
Ver. that had only examined the *genius* of that holy religion, could
3 have imagined that such *a mystery of iniquity* should have arisen
7 in it, and *that man of sin* have been *revealed?* Surely, when the particulars of the description come to be compared with the accomplishment, it may seem owing to some judicial infatuation, that men of deep policy and great penetration, with this very passage of scripture in their hands, should have suffered the marks of *antichrist* to be so very apparent, even in many instances, beyond what might have seemed absolutely necessary
4 for establishing that secular kingdom which they sought; particularly, that the *pope* on high days should set himself *on a high throne, in the temple of God*, to be there solemnly *adored*, and should have permitted his *parasites* so expressly to boast that *he is God*, and to give him, in some of their licensed and authorised works[k], *Divine titles.*

The scandalous and extravagant pretences which *the* followers of the *papacy* have made to *miracles*, exceeding in number, and some of them in marvellous circumstances, those of *Christ* and
9 his *apostles*, plainly display *the energy of Satan*, that father of frauds, pious and impious. And the most incredible lies, which they have, by solemn and irrevocable acts, made essential to their faith, *shew the strength of delusion*, beyond what could have been
11 imagined, had not *fact* led us into the *theory*. How dreadful is it to think of some of the expressions which the *spirit* itself uses, when speaking of these *artifices in deceit!*—that they should *be abandoned by God to believe a lie, that they may all be damned who have pleasure in unrighteousness*,—that they might bring
12 upon themselves eternal aggravated damnation. Who would not tremble, who would not grieve for so many of our *fellow men*, yea of those, who degenerate as their form of Christianity is, we must yet call our *fellow Christians*, who are thus dishonoured, enslaved, and endangered? The Lord grant that they may not be *utterly* undone! Let them *despise* us, let them by most solemn *execrations* annually repeated, devote us to destruction, and prepare

k *Divine titles.*] See Mr. Barker's sermon at Salter's-hall, in the lecture against Popery; and Mr. Chandler's account of the conference in Nicholas-Lane.

pare against us all the instruments of it in their power, yet will we still *pray* for them. The Lord grant that they may *recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are led captive by him at his pleasure!* (2 Tim. ii. 26.) Let us recommend to Divine compassion the souls drawn after artful and wicked leaders, in the simplicity of their hearts, and take comfort in this thought, that the time will come, when *the Lord shall destroy this son of perdition with the breath of his mouth and the brightness of his coming.* 8 May the remnant of God's people among them take the alarm, and *come out from them* in time, *and be separate*, that they may not be *partakers with them in their plagues;* (Rev. xviii. 4.) SECT. ii.

SECT. III.

Paul returns thanks to God for his mercy to the Thessalonians in supporting them hitherto, and addresses such exhortations to them, and prayers for them, as might most effectually conduce to their continued establishment, desiring also their prayers for him amidst his various labours and dangers. 2 Thess. II. 13,—*to the end.* III. 1—5.

2 THESSALONIANS II. 13.

2 Thes. II. 13. BUT we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.

SUCH corruptions as these will at length arise in the church, and we have hinted that something of this spirit is already beginning to work. *But* blessed be God that so little of it appears among you; on the contrary, we are sensible that *we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren*, whom we have great reason to address, as *beloved of the Lord, because* that cordial zeal with which you have embraced the gospel, and that resolution with which you retain it in the midst of afflictions and persecutions, give us ground cheerfully to conclude, that *God hath*, of his wise counsels and abundant grace, *from the beginning* of his work and plan for the redemption of men, *chosen you to* eternal *salvation;* for a participation of which you are prepared *by* that *sanctification*, which is the work *of the* Holy *Spirit* on your hearts, *and* that *belief of the truth*, which hath so effectual a tendency to promote it. SECT. iii. 2 Thess. II. 13.

14 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is God's appointed way of obtaining an interest in this salvation, *to which he hath called you by our gospel*, even *to the obtaining the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ;* that glory which his mercy hath prepared, and to which his faithful care shall at length conduct all his obedient followers, 14

SECT. iii.

lowers, in which they shall fully enjoy the rich provisions of his love, and be made like him in holiness and happiness. *Therefore, brethren,* let me exhort you to *stand fast, and* strongly to *retain the instructions which you have learned* of us, *whether by word or by our* former *letter*, as you may be assured you have there a genuine representation of the contents of those important doctrines with which we are intrusted. *And may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father, who hath loved us* in so surprising a manner, *and given* [*us*] by his gospel such a fund of *everlasting consolation, and* such *good hope through* his overflowing *grace*, when, without it, we could not have had any glimmering of hope, or prospect of comfort for ever, May he, I say, by the rich communication of his love and mercy, *comfort your hearts, and* may he *strengthen* and confirm *you*, making you ready *for every good word and work*, that his name may be glorified, and your present satisfaction and future reward may abound. *As for what remains*, I shall not enlarge, but must beseech you, *brethren*, that ye would *pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run* a free and unobstructed course every where, *and be* greatly *glorified*[a], *as* through his grace [*it is*] *among you; And that we*, whom he hath honoured with the office of dispensing it, *may be delivered from unreasonable*[b] *and wicked men*, who are endeavouring as much as possible to prevent the propagation of the gospel, by destroying or confining us. We cannot wonder at it, *for all men have not faith*[c], and there are so many corruptions opposing its progress, and they are so powerfully abetted by the great enemy of souls, that we have rather reason to admire the Divine agency, in making it so successful as it is. *But*, whatever difficulties we meet with, this is our comfort, that *the Lord* Jesus Christ, to whom we devote our labours,

2 Thess. II. 15.

15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions, which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

16 Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given *us* everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace,

17 Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

III. 1. Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have *free* course, and be glorified even as *it is* with you;

2 And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.

3 But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish

a *May run and be glorified.*] Some think these words allude to the *applause* given to those that made a speedy progress in the races, which constituted so important a part of the *Grecian games.*

b *Unreasonable.*] Bishop *Wilkins* observes that ἄτοποι may signify *absurd, contumacious*, persons, who are not to be fixed by any principles, and whom no topics can work upon. *Wilkins of Nat. Rel.* p. 34. Many such remain among *us* even to this day.

c *Faith.*] By *faith* some understand a principle of *honesty*, which may encourage a confidence to be reposed in them. *Howe of the Spirit*, Vol. II. p. 192. But I rather understand it of that *upright* and *candid* disposition which would engage men to receive the testimony of the *apostles.*

stablish you, and keep *you* from evil.

labours, and have committed our souls, *is* invariably *faithful; who will strengthen and keep* both us and *you from the evil one* and all his works. He will indeed preserve us from every thing that would on the whole be hurtful to us, and over-rule to our truest good what has the appearance of evil. *And we have* a cheerful *confidence in the* fidelity and grace of our blessed *Lord, with respect to you,* that by his powerful influence you are and will be established in every good resolution, so *that* in every instance *ye both do and will do the things which* in his name *we give you in charge.* *And* may we have the pleasure of seeing this our confidence happily answered more and more! *May the Lord direct your hearts into* the more vigorous and constant exercise of *the love of God, and into the* exercises of that *patience* under all your trials and afflictions which becomes the disciples *of Christ*[d], and is agreeable to his example.

SECT. iii.

2 Thess. III. 3.

4 And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you.

4

5 And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.

5

IMPROVEMENT.

How wisely and happily does the *apostle* unite the views of the grace of God and the duties of men, while he represents our *choice* to *salvation* in a light so worthy of God, since this salvation is still to be obtained *through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.* Our spirits must be *sanctified* by the operation of the *Divine Spirit:* the *truth* must be not only speculatively, but powerfully and *practically* believed, or all our hopes will be vain. But surely, were it possible that salvation could any other way be obtained, it would be much less desirable, or rather, that which did not imply a sanctified spirit, and an heart open to receive and obey the truth, would not deserve the name of *salvation.* Blessed be God, who in this view hath *called us to obtain* salvation and *glory by Jesus Christ,* even *God our Father who hath loved us.* From him do these *everlasting consolations* flow. It is by his blessed and gracious operation we are *strengthened and established in every good word and work.* His *fidelity* stands engaged to do it, if we humbly commit ourselves to him, and wait upon him. The prayers of the *apostles,* dictated no doubt from above, concur with the promises to encourage our hopes, that he will

Ver. 13

14

16

17

Chap. iii. 3.

d *The patience of Christ,*] We render it, *the patient waiting for Christ,* but υπομονην του Χριστου may rather signify *Christian patience,* or that patience with which Christ himself suffered the many injuries and afflictions through which he passed.

SECT. iii.

will *direct our hearts into the love of God and the patience of Jesus Christ.* On the exercise of that love and that patience doth the happiness of life chiefly depend. Too ready are our weak hearts to wander from it, and to faint under the difficulties that lie in our way. Let us call on him to preserve and maintain the graces he hath implanted, that they may be exerted with growing vigour and constancy even unto the end.

Ver. 5

2 *Unreasonable and wicked men* will oppose the progress of the *gospel*, which has so powerful a tendency to promote holiness and comfort; and, as there are those *that have not faith*, they will be ready to labour its destruction. But when the *prayers* of Christians are frequently engaged, that *the word of God may run and be glorified*, there is great reason to hope that much of their perverse opposition may be over-ruled to most contrary purposes, so that the *wrath of man shall praise him, and the remainder of that wrath be restrained;* (Psal. lxxvi. 10.)

1

SECT. IV.

The Apostle concludes his epistle with giving some directions as to the strenuous exercise of discipline, with respect to some disorderly persons, and with renewed prayers for the prosperity of the church at Thessalonica. 2 Thes. III. 6—*to the end.*

2 Thessalonians III. 6.

SECT. iv.

A ZEALOUS regard for the honour of our Divine Master requires me to inculcate on the churches under my inspection, a strict care in the exercise of discipline; and I heartily wish there were nothing in your circumstances which particularly demanded my farther admonitions on that head. *But*, as many good men are ready to be too remiss here, from a fear of displeasing others, and making themselves enemies, *we* solemnly *charge you, brethren, in the* awful and beloved *name of our Lord Jesus Christ*, the credit and progress of whose religion is so nearly concerned in the matter, *that ye withdraw yourselves from any brother*, whatever his rank, circumstances, or profession may be, *who* in the conduct of his life *walks irregularly, and not agreeably to the instructions which he hath received from us*, with regard to the grand rules of Christian morality. I speak freely on this head, *for ye yourselves know how it becomes you* in this respect *to imitate us; for we were not* in any

2 Thes. III. 6.

7

2 Thes. III. 6.

NOW we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

7 For yourselves know how you ought to follow us: for we be-

behaved not ourselves disorderly among you.

any instance *irregular among you*, but endeavoured to behave so as to recommend and enforce our doctrine by our example. SECT. iv.

8 Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought: but wrought with labour and travel night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:

Neither did we eat any man's bread at free cost, when we had an opportunity of subsisting gratis, at the expence of any particular persons or families, *but with* diligent *labour*, and frequently with very tedious *and* wearisome *toil*, *we wrought* with our own hands, in that profession which we had learned, and this *night and day*[a], *that we might not be burdensome to any of you*, and give you the least room to suspect that we had any secular views in the doctrine we brought you, or that indolence led us to engage in preaching it. 2 Thess. III. 8.

9 Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.

Not that we are destitute of authority, from the reason of things, and the express commission of Christ himself to take a moderate subsistence from the persons in whose instruction we employ our time and strength; for the Lord himself hath ordained, that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel: *but* we declined using that liberty, *that we might exhibit ourselves to you* [*as*] *an example, that ye might imitate us* in a frugal and industrious life. 9

10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

And ye know, that, *even when we were* yet *with you*, *we* were so fearful of any irregularity in this respect, that we expressly *gave this in charge to you, that if any one would not work, neither should he eat;* that no idle drones should consume the common stock, and quarter himself freely on the diligent and laborious, but rather be brought under a necessity of working, to relieve his own want, if he would not do it from a sense of social duty and good order. 10

11 For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.

We now insist upon this the more largely, *for we hear that there are some among you who walk irregularly*, *not* prudently *working at all* for their own honest subsistence, *but impertinently busy* in attending to the concerns of others. 11

12 Now them that are such we command, and exhort, by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work

They who are of *such* a character *therefore*, *we* solemnly *charge and* tenderly *entreat*, *by* the dear and venerable name of *our Lord Jesus Christ*, *that working with quietness*, and silently pursuing their proper business, *they eat* what 12

a *Night and day.*] This expression seems to intimate, that the *apostle* was sometimes obliged to sit up a part of the night at his business, as a *tent-maker*, that he might have the day at leisure to preach to those that came to him for religious instruction.

b *Faint*

SECT. iv.

what may with justice be called *their own bread* not supporting themselves with what has been purchased by the labours of others, while they continue unprofitable to society.

work, and eat their own bread.

2 Thess. III. 12.

13 *And as for you*, my *brethren*, the wiser and sounder part of the church, I would fain animate and exhort you, that ye *faint not*, nor be discouraged, [*while*] you are engaged in a course of *well-doing*[b]: prosecuting those actions which are fair, beautiful, and honourable, however men may censure you, or whatever difficulties may lie in your way, yea, though some should

13 But ye, brethren, be not weary in well-doing.

14 ungratefully abuse your goodness. *But if any one is not obedient to our word*, whether spoken to you during our short abode, or signified *by this*, or my former *epistle*, *set a mark upon that man*, whoever he be, *and have no* familiar *converse with him*, *that* so, seeing himself shunned by his brethren, whose esteem it is natural for every one to wish, *he may be ashamed*, and by that shame may be recovered[c] from those irregularities which have engaged you to avoid his company, and made his friendship for the pre-

14 And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.

15 sent infamous. *Yet account* [*him*] *not as an enemy*, nor do any thing in the least to hurt him in his secular affairs, or to exasperate his irregular passions, *but admonish* [*him*] *as a brother*, and with faithful love to his soul, as well as a tender concern for the edification of the church, and credit of religion, labour for his recovery.

15 Yet count *him* not as enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother.

16 And *now*, to conclude, *may* Jesus, *the* great *Lord of peace*, who hath established concord between heaven and earth, and so effectually provided for uniting the hearts of men in the most pacific and friendly bonds, *himself give you peace at all times by every means.* May all the dispensations of his Providence, in every place and circumstance of life, concur to advance the serenity and happiness of your minds; and for this purpose, *may the Lord* continually [*be*] *with you all.*

16 Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always, by all means. The Lord *be* with you all.

17 Thus far I have dictated to the person whose assistance I use in writing this; but now I will take the pen myself, and add *the salutation by the hand of me Paul, which is the token in every epistle*

17 The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token

b *Faint not* while *well doing.*] *Diodate* gives it this excellent turn; though some may *abuse* your liberality, be not deterred thereby from works of charity.

c By that shame be recovered.] Some would render ἐντραπῃ, that he may be *reclaimed by shame*; but I thought it better to insert the additional words in the *paraphrase*, than the *version*.

d *The*

ken in every epistle: so I write.

18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

epistle [d]; for *so*, to prevent counterfeits, *I write* that the several churches may be secure that what is thus signed is genuine. *May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ* [*be*] *with you all*, and may you enjoy all the happy consequences that flow from the most plentiful communication of it! To which I am sure you will put your hearty *amen*, as I do mine.

SECT. iv.

2 Thes. III. 18.

IMPROVEMENT.

MAY *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*, given in a richer abundance to his *churches*, animate and engage them to maintain that *discipline* which is so necessary to his honour and to their own comfort and edification. Scarcely can we say which is more to be lamented, the neglect of the *thing*, or the abuse of the *name*. It never could be the design of the wise *Legislator* of the church, *that secular* terrors should be pressed into his service, *that fines, imprisonments, and civil incapacities* should be the result of censures passed in his peaceful and benevolent name. Irregularities, in those that call themselves *his followers*, are indeed to be observed, and discountenanced. Offenders are to be *admonished*, and, if lighter admonitions succeed not, they are to be *avoided*: but still in a view of recovering them by an ingenuous *shame* (if any remainder of it be left in their hearts) from those practices, which, if connived at, would soon become the shame of the *society*. Thus far therefore let us resolutely carry our censures, separating scandalous persons from our *sacramental communion*, and declining that *familiar converse* with those who are so separted, which might lead them to think we *privately* disregarded these censures which had in *public* so awful a form; yet at the same time let us not treat them *as enemies*, or as those of whose recovery we have no hope, but remember the tenderness *of brotherly love*, amidst all the severest acts of brotherly reproof, and the common tye of *humanity*, to those whom we are commanded to regard only as *heathens or publicans*.

Ver. 18 11 6 14 15

May

d *The token in every epistle.*] I think it very evident, from this and several other passages, that Paul, not being very familiarly used to *Greek characters*, and perhaps to save time, every moment of which he knew how to estimate, used to dictate to some ready *scribe*, perhaps sometimes while his hands were employed in the labours of his trade. And this may account for some small *inaccuracies* of style at which little minds have been offended, and which some, who seem to carry their scrupulosity to an excess, have been oversolicitous to vindicate, but which they, who read with any thing of the temper of the writer, will easily know how to excuse. What was hinted before in this epistle, (chap. ii. 2,) may be an intimation that some fictitious letters were early written in his name, by which St. Paul might be induced to add this token with his own hand.

SECT. iv.

May there be, in the professed disciples of *Jesus*, a care to avoid and discourage that *sloth* and *petulance* which would make men *busy* in other people's matters, while they are quite negligent of their own. Let us remember the example of the *apostle*, and be solicitous *to eat our own bread.* So shall we be most likely to enjoy inward peace and satisfaction of mind, and find that relish in the possession of a little which the largest supplies would not give to them who are conscious to themselves of sloth or dishonesty.

Ver. 11 12 8, 9

Some worthless people there have always been in every station of life, and under all religious professions, and some idle drones, who are ready to abuse the bounty of others better than themselves. But let us not from hence seek a mean excuse for refusing to such as really stand in need, acts of liberality and charity. *Let us not be weary in well-doing ;* the time of rest and reward will come. While we are waiting for it, the presence of *the Lord of peace* may be expected, if we take care to adorn his religion by the usefulness, as well as the meekness, of our behaviour, in this world of misery and provocation, through which he hath appointed us to pass, and through which he has *himself* condescended to pass before us, to make our way safe and our exit happy.

13

THE END OF THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR ON THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR,

A PARAPHRASE

ON

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

TIMOTHY.

WITH

CRITICAL NOTES, AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.

A

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO TIMOTHY.

TIMOTHY, to whom this epistle is addressed, was a native of Lystra, a city of Lycaonia, in the Lesser Asia. His father was a Greek, but his mother, (whose name was Eunice) a Jewess (Acts xvi. 1.) and, as well as his grandmother Lois, a person of an excellent character, (2 Tim. i. 5). The pious care they took in his education soon appeared to have its desired success; since we are assured by the *apostle*, that from a child he was well acquainted with the holy Scriptures. It is not certain when he was converted to the Christian faith; though it is not improbable but it might be in the first visit that Paul and Barnabas made to Lystra, mentioned Acts xiv. when the *apostle* was stoned by the malice of the Jews and left for dead, to which he refers, 2 Tim. iii. 10. However this be, when St. Paul came unto those parts again, he had the satisfaction to find, not only that Timothy continued stedfast in the profession of Christianity, but was in great esteem with the churches at Lystra and Iconium for his distinguished piety and zeal. The discovery of so excellent a temper promised fair for eminent usefulness, and could not fail of recommending him to the peculiar regard of the *apostle*, who from that time seems to have fixed upon him as his companion and assistant in his labours. But, as he was a Jew on the mother's side, he judged it prudent that he should be circumcised before he entered upon his ministerial office: after which, he did not scruple to ordain him in a solemn manner by the imposition of hands (1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 6), though he was at that time probably not much more than twenty years old. (Compare 1 Tim. iv. 12.) From this time we often hear of him as attending the *apostle* in his travels, and assisting him in preaching the gospel; and from Heb. xiii. 23, we may gather, that he shared with him in his sufferings as well as his labours; to which we may add, that St. Paul has thought fit to join

his name with his own in the inscription to several of the epistles, viz. 2 Cor. Philip. Coloss. 1 and 2 Thess. and Philem. He appears in every respect to have been eminently qualified for the important office with which he was invested; and the honourable terms in which the *apostle* always mentions him to the churches, and the confidence which, notwithstanding his youth, he reposed in him upon all occasions, are sufficient to give us a very high idea of his character. And perhaps there was no one of all his companions and fellow-labourers whose sentiments and views of things so exactly corresponded with his own. He appears, from their first acquaintance with each other, to have been particularly concerned to form him for usefulness; and no doubt his principal view, in taking him at first as the companion of his travels, was, that he might be more immediately under his inspection, and enjoy the advantage of his more free and familiar instructions. No wonder then, if the apostle looked upon his pupil with peculiar complacency, and even *parental* affection, when he saw him answer his fondest expectations, and fill up with so much honour the station he had assigned him. No wonder, on the other hand, that Timothy should discover a filial reverence for a person of St. Paul's venerable character, with whom he had been so intimately connected, and from whom he had received so many and such important favours.

It is well known, that the *date* of this epistle hath been greatly disputed: to enter largely into the controversy would far exceed the limits allotted to these Introductions. However, as in a work of this kind the reader may expect some notice should be taken of a question which is of some importance, and as he may not be furnished with those authors *, who have treated it more fully, I shall here give some account of the principal hypotheses relating to it, and state the evidence with which they are respectively attended.

The hypothesis which seems to have prevailed most generally, is, That it was written about the year of our Lord 58, when Paul had lately quitted Ephesus on account of the tumult raised there by Demetrius, and was gone into Macedonia, Acts xx. 1. And this is the opinion of many learned critics, ancient and modern; particularly of Athanasius, Theodoret, Baronius, Ludovic, Capellus, Blondel, Hammond, Grotius, Salmasius, Lightfoot and Benson.—On the other hand, Bishop Pearson endeavours to prove, that it could not be written till the year 65, between the first and second imprisonment of Paul at Rome; and L'Enfant, without any hesitation, goes into this hypothesis.

It is universally allowed that St. Paul must have written this *first epistle to Timothy* at some journey which he made from Ephesus to Macedonia, having, in the mean time, left Timothy behind him at Ephesus; for he expressly saith to Timothy, 1 Tim. i. 3, *I besought*

* See *Pearson Op. Post. Diss.* 1. *C.* ix. § 5. *p.* 75, &c.
Benson's Propag. of Christianity, vol. II. *p.* 167—170.
Witsii Meletem. C. ix. § 3—5.
Boyse's Works, *vol.* II. *p.* 292—297.

sought thee still to abide at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia. Bishop Pearson accordingly, in order to prove that the date of this epistle was as late as he supposes, having observed that we read only of *three* journeys of Paul through Macedonia (*viz.* Acts xvi. 9, 10; Acts xx. 1; and *ibid.* ver. 3), endeavours to show, that it could not be written in any of these, and must consequently have been written in some *fourth* journey, not mentioned in the history, which he supposes was about the year 65, after Paul was released from his first imprisonment at Rome.——That it was not written at the *first* or *third* of these journies is readily allowed, and it appears from the whole series of the context in both places; but it is the *second* that is generally contended for.

Now the Bishop supposes, that the epistle was not written at this *second* journey, because it appears from Acts xix. 22, that Paul did not leave Timothy then at Ephesus, having sent him before into Macedonia, and appointed him to meet him at Corinth. See 1 Cor. iv. 17; xvi. 10.——To this it is answered, that though Paul did indeed send Timothy from Ephesus, yet, as we are told that Paul made some stay there after that (Acts xix. 22), Timothy might be returned before the tumult, and so the *apostle* might, notwithstanding, leave him behind at Ephesus, when he himself set out on his journey for Macedonia. (For it should be observed, that he changed his scheme, and, before he went to Corinth, where he had appointed Timothy to meet him, spent some time in Macedonia; from whence he wrote his *second epistle* to the Corinthians in company with Timothy, who came to him in his return from Corinth, and continued with him while he remained in these parts.) Now that Timothy returned to Ephesus before the *apostle* departed, will indeed appear very probable, if (as Mr. Boyse argues from Acts xx. 31, compared with chap. xix. 8, 10) St. Paul spent *three years* at Ephesus, and in the neighbouring parts, and sent Timothy away *nine months* before the tumult; which would leave him time enough to perform his commission, and return to Ephesus before the *apostle* had left it. (See *Family Expos.* vol. VIII. sect. 43, *note* [e], p. 189.)——To which it may be added, that it appears from 1 Cor. xvi. 10, 11, which epistle was written from Ephesus, that Paul expected Timothy, after his journey to Macedonia and Corinth, would return to him at *that city*.

The Bishop further objects to the epistle's being written at this *second* journey, mentioned Acts xx. 1; that when the *apostle* set out he proposed to go into Macedonia, and visit the churches there and in Greece, which must necessarily take up a considerable time; whereas in his epistle to Timothy he speaks of his intention to return very soon. (1 Tim. iii. 14; iv. 13.)——But it is natural to suppose, that some unforeseen accident might detain him longer than he designed; and, being disappointed of some assistance he expected from Macedonia, he might afterwards send for Timothy to come to him, who, as the passage by sea might be dispatched in a few days, might arrive at Macedon before the *apostle* wrote his *second epistle* to the Corinthians.

The

The bishop further argues, that it appears from the epistle to Titus, as well as from some passages in his epistle to the Philippians, and to Philemon, that Paul actually made another journey into those parts after his first imprisonment at Rome, in which journey he left Titus behind him at Crete, which lay in his way from Rome. (Tit. i. 5.) Now it must be allowed the bishop, that the supposition which Salmasius makes is not at all likely, that Paul touched at Crete when he was going from Achaia to Macedonia, for then he carried a collection with him, (Cor. xvi. 1—5; Acts xxiv. 17,) and therefore it was not probable he would go so much out of his way; and when he was about to sail into Syria, and heard that snares were laid for him, (Acts xx. 3,) it is not to be supposed that he would go into the mouth of them; or that he would take up his time in preaching at Crete, when he was in haste to be at Jerusalem, (Acts xx. 16;) or that he would winter at Nicopolis, (Tit. iii. 12) when winter was passed, and he desired to be at Jerusalem before the passover.—But then it hath been observed, that perhaps the epistle to Titus might be among the first Paul wrote, and his voyage to Crete, one of the many events before his going up to the council at Jerusalem, which in the history of the Acts, Luke not being in company with him when they occurred, had entirely passed over; and of which there are, notwithstanding, some traces in *St. Paul's epistles*; particularly 2 Cor. xi. and Rom. xv. 19. Or if it be allowed that the epistle to Titus was written by Paul after his first imprisonment, it will not follow from thence, that the first epistle to Timothy must have been written at the same time. This is a brief account of the arguments for Bishop Pearson's hypothesis, that this *epistle* was written about the year 65, with their respective answers.

On the other hand, it is pleaded in favour of the first mentioned hypothesis, namely its being written in the year 58.

(1.) That when Paul wrote his *first epistle* to him, Timothy was a young man, (1 Tim. iv. 12, *Let no man despise thy youth*,) which is also referred to, 1 Cor. xvi. 10, 11. Now supposing he were only 16 years old when he was converted to Christianity, which was in the year 46, he would in the year 58 be about 28 years of age; but in 65, the time when Bishop Pearson supposes the epistle was written, he would be 35, and past a youth, 30 being the age at which the Levites were, according to the law, to enter upon their office. And whereas it hath been objected to this observation, that even in his *second* epistle, which is supposed to be written some years after his *first*, he is cautioned to flee *youthful lusts*; it may be replied, that though he were indeed at that time in the *meridian* of life, yet he was not out of the reach of such temptations, though the season of youth be more peculiarly liable to them. Besides, the admonition might be intended to suggest this thought, that having *outgrown youth*, he ought to be so much the more superior to them.

(2.) It is observed, that the state of things in the church of Ephesus in 58, better suits the contents of the *first epistle* than it does in 65. For

65. For instance, it appears from chap. i. 3, 4, 6, 7, and other passages, that those corruptions which the *apostle* speaks of as greatly increased and risen to a considerable height, when he met the elders of Ephesus at Miletus, and when he wrote his *second* epistle, were just beginning to creep into the church at the time of his writing the *first*.—To which it may be added, that from the particular instructions Paul, in his *first epistle*, gives Timothy about ordination, it seems as if the church of Ephesus, and those in the neighbourhood, had few or no bishops at the time it was written; from whence it appears extremely probable, that the meeting between Paul and the *elders or bishops*, of Ephesus at Miletus, must have been after the writing of *this epistle*. Mr. Drury, on the other hand, hath pleaded, that when Paul addressed the elders at Miletus, he speaks of these things as *future*, (Acts xx. 29;) which, when he wrote his *first epistle* to Timothy, were actually accomplished; such as the trouble they met with from *Judaizing teachers*, &c. which are the persons he supposes we are to understand by grievous or ravening *wolves*, in the forecited passage of the Acts: and therefore the epistle must be written after that interview. But to this it is replied, that the *ravening wolves*, of which the *apostle* there speaks, were *heathen* persecutors, and not such seducers as should arise among themselves —— Some have further objected, that even in his epistle to the Ephesians, the *apostle* does not speak of those evils as having risen to such a height in the church, as he does in his *first epistle* to Timothy, though *the epistle* to the Ephesians was undoubtedly written after the interview at Miletus: therefore the *first epistle* to Timothy must be written *some length of time* after that interview. To this it may be justly replied, that, without supposing the *apostle* to intimate in his *first epistle*, that the evils referred to had actually prevailed so far, it is certain, from that part of Luke's history which precedes Acts xx. that there was such a bigotted zeal for the Mosaic law, among some professing Christians, as would justify the caution given to Timothy; especially, considering that a great many Jews were always resident in Ephesus. And though in the epistle to the Ephesians, Paul says nothing of Judaizing teachers (nor of the *wolves and perverse men* who should arise, against whom it is certain, he had before the *date* of it cautioned the elders at Miletus,) yet many of the advices he gives in that epistle, as well as in this to Timothy, would be of great use in preserving Christians from such dangers. But,

(3.) The argument on which the principal stress hath been laid, in order to prove the *date* of this epistle to be about the year 58, is taken from the solemn *prophetic* declaration which Paul made when he took his leave of the elders of Ephesus at Miletus, that they *would never see his face any more*, (Acts xx. 25;) from whence it is inferred, that he must have written his epistle to Timothy before that interview; since in that he not only expresses a full expectation of returning, but speaks of his having just left Ephesus when he set out upon his journey for Macedonia.—The chief objection

objection to this seems to arise from 2 Tim. iv. 20, where St. Paul acquaints Timothy, that he had left Trophimus sick at Miletum, plainly intimating that he had *lately* been visiting those parts; which, admitting that epistle to have been written but a short time before his death, will indeed prove that he took another journey into Asia after his first imprisonment: but we cannot certainly infer from thence that he must have been at Ephesus. Dr. Whitby and other critics have observed, that the Miletum here mentioned was in Crete, and consequently, not the same with Miletus near Ephesus, where the *apostle* had that interview with the elders so often referred to. If it should appear to any most probable on the whole, that St. Paul did take such a journey after his first imprisonment, and make a visit to Ephesus; in order to reconcile it with Acts xx. 25, he must make this supposition, that most of the ministers or elders of Ephesus, and of the neighbouring parts were, by that time, either dead or removed.—From this detail of the arguments in favour of both these hypotheses, the reader may determine for himself which bids the fairest for truth. See *Family Expositor*, vol. VIII. sect. 45, *notes* [b], [c]. Compare sect. 43, *note* [e], and sect. 46, *note* r.

Upon examining the contents of this *epistle*, it appears, that it was principally intended to direct Timothy in managing the affairs of the church while he abode at Ephesus; and particularly to instruct him in choosing proper persons to be set apart for the ministry and other offices in the church, as well as in the exercise of a regular discipline. Another part of the *apostle's* design was to caution this young evangelist against the influence of those Judaizing teachers, who, by their subtle distinctions and endless controversies, had corrupted the purity and simplicity of the gospel; to press upon him a constant regard, in all his preaching, to the interests of practical religion, and to animate him to the greatest diligence, fidelity, and zeal, in the discharge of his office.

In pursuance of this design, the *apostle*, after having saluted his beloved pupil with his usual affection, and reminded him of the reasons for which he left him behind at Ephesus, takes occasion, from the idle speculations and Jewish controversies that had been unhappily introduced into the church, to assert the practical nature and tendency of the Christian doctrine, and from thence to remonstrate against the absurdity of opposing the *gospel*, out of a pretended zeal for the *law*; when in reality the great end of the law was much more effectually answered by the gospel, as it not only restrained men from the more open and notorious acts of vice, against which the law was more immediately levelled, but was calculated to raise its votaries to the most sublime heights of virtue, chap. i. 1—11. The *apostle*, having mentioned the gospel, cannot forbear digressing, in the fulness of his heart, to express the affectionate sense he had of the Divine goodness in calling him, who had been a persecutor, to the Christian faith and ministerial office, and observes that this favour was extended to him, though so unworthy, as an encouragement to those that should believe

believe in every future age, ver. 12—17. He then goes on to recommend to Timothy a conscientious care in discharging the duties of that sacred office he had committed to him, and reminds him of the fatal miscarriage of some who had apostatized from the faith. In pursuance of this general exhortation, he directs that prayer should be offered up for all men, and especially for princes and magistrates; as it was the great design of Christianity to promote the peace and welfare of communities, and the happiness of the whole human race. And, as the prudent behaviour of all the members of the society was of great importance to the credit of religion, he advises the women to maintain the strictest decency in their dress, as well as modesty and reserve in their whole deportment, walking as persons professing godliness; and forbids their teaching in public assemblies, as inconsistent with that due subjection to the other sex which he enforces from the scripture-account of the fall, ver. 18, *to the end, and* chap. ii. *throughout* — As one very important part of Timothy's office was to ordain ministers and officers in the church, the *apostle* proceeds to instruct him in the qualifications necessary both for bishops and deacons. A bishop, or pastor, he describes as a person of a blameless and exemplary character, distinguished for his temperance, moderation, and charity, the husband of one wife, prudent in the management of his own family, not lately converted to the Christian faith, but well furnished with knowledge, and in good repute with his heathen neighbours. His directions for the choice of deacons are nearly the same, which he concludes with representing the advantages that would attend the faithful discharge of that office; chap. iii. 1—13. And, that Timothy might be the more concerned to follow his instructions, he speaks in very high terms of the importance of the charge committed to him, and the sublime and excellent nature of the Christian dispensation. Yet he assures him the Spirit had expressly foretold, that apostates should arise in the church, who would corrupt the purity and simplicity of the gospel, requiring abstinence from marriage, and from various kinds of meats, which God had left indifferent, and teaching other doctrines equally false and pernicious, ver. 14, *to the end*, and chap. iv. 1—5. As many of the precepts he had given him were of universal concern, he exhorts him to inculcate them upon the society committed to his care, leaving those idle tales, of which the Jewish rabbies were so fond, and confining his discourses to the great truths of practical religion: these, he observes, were the foundation of all their hopes as Christians, and the advancement of these was the great end of all his labours and sufferings. And, to render his ministry among them successful, he recommends it to him, to maintain such a purity and sanctity of manners as might not only secure him from that contempt to which his youth would otherwise expose him, but render him a worthy example to the flock. With the same view, he exhorts him to use the utmost diligence in exercising and improving the gifts with which God had honoured him, for the edification of the church and the salva-

tion of souls, ver. 6, *to the end.*—The *apostle* then proceeds to lay down some directions for Timothy's conduct towards persons in different circumstances of life, advising him to suit his manner of address to their respective ages and standing in the church. This leads him to give some rules in relation to those widows who were entrusted by the society with some peculiar office, and maintained in the discharge of it out of the public stock. None were to be admitted into this number, but those who, being advanced in life, were destitute of any other support, and had maintained an exemplary character for piety, charity, and every good work; for he observes, the many irregularities into which persons in younger life were often betrayed, was a sufficient reason for excluding them from such a trust; chap. v. 1—16. St. Paul further directs that a peculiar honour should be paid to faithful ministers, and no accusation received against them, but on the credit of two or three witnesses. And, as a due care in the exercise of Christian discipline was of so much importance to the credit of religion, he gives him a most solemn charge to observe the strictest impartiality in the execution of this difficult part of his office. On the same principles, he admonishes him not to engage too hastily in setting apart any to the ministry, lest he should make himself partaker of their guilt; and, from the variety of men's characters, intimates the necessity of prudence and caution in his manner of treating them. To all which he adds some advices relating to the behaviour of servants towards their masters, whether they were heathens or Christians, ver. 17, *to the end*, and chap. vi. 1, 2.—The *apostle* having finished his instructions to Timothy in relation to the pastoral office, exhorts him to avoid those false teachers, who, instead of insisting upon the great truths of practical religion, amused their hearers with trifling controversies, which only served to raise a spirit of envy and contention in the church, while at the same time, under a pretended zeal for the truth, they were really carrying on their own mercenary views. This leads him to caution Timothy against all approaches towards a covetous temper, which he represents as the root of all evil, and to press upon him a constant and growing regard to vital practical godliness, as of the utmost consequence to his own and his people's happiness; chap. vi. 3—12. To give yet greater force to his admonitions, the *apostle* concludes with a most solemn charge to Timothy, as in the presence of God and Christ, to maintain the purity of the Christian faith as he had received it from him, that it might be preserved uncorrupt till the glorious appearance of Christ at the great day.—After which, he inserts, by way of Postscript, an exhortation to the rich, not to be puffed up with their wealth, but to employ it in acts of charity and beneficence, that they might secure to themselves eternal life: and closes all with renewing his earnest request to Timothy, to keep that gospel he had entrusted with him, and carefully to avoid those empty speculations and vain sophistries by which some had been ensnared, ver. 13, *to the end of the epistle.*

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PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

TIMOTHY.

SECT. I.

The Apostle Paul, after having saluted Timothy with much affection, and mentioned the reasons of his leaving him at Ephesus, remonstrates against the absurdity of opposing the gospel, out of pretended zeal for the law of God. 1 Tim. I. 1—11.

1 Tim. I. 1.

PAUL an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, *which is* our hope;

2 Unto Timothy, *my* own son in the faith: grace, mercy, *and* peace,

1 Timothy I. 1.

SECT. i.

1 Tim. I. 1,

I *PAUL, an apostle of* the Lord *Jesus Christ according to the* gracious *appointment* and command *of God our Saviour, and* of *the Lord Jesus Christ,* [*who is*] the foundation of all *our hope* of true happiness in this world and the next, Send 2 this epistle *to Timothy,* [*my*] *genuine son*[a] *in the faith,* in whom I see those unfeigned graces of true piety, which God hath wrought in his heart by my means, and which I have myself by his grace experienced in my own. May *grace, mercy,*

a *My genuine Son*] It is not certain from the history, that Timothy was at first converted by Paul: compare Acts xvi. 1, 2. It seems therefore that he calls him his *son*, chiefly to express the parental affection he had for him, and the complacency he found in that assistance he had received from him in the work of the ministry, and in the *filial* reverence and affection which this excellent young minister expressed to him; nor can we doubt but Timothy had received much confirmation in Christianity from the *apostle.*

SECT. i.

1 Tim. I. 2.

mercy, [and] peace ever be upon thee, *from God, our* almighty and ever gracious *Father, and* from *Christ Jesus our Lord*, through whom he communicates these blessings to sinful men.

peace, from God our Father, and Jesus Christ our Lord.

3 *As I entreated thee to continue at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia* (Acts xx. 1), *that thou mightest charge some* who seemed inclinable to introduce their own corrupt notions into the church, *that they should not teach other doctrine*, contrary to the certain truth I had delivered to them, [*so*] I hope thou wilt still be mindful of the exhortations I gave thee, and

3 As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine,

4 [*act*] strenuously upon them. In pursuance of these views, I depend upon it, that thou wilt caution [*and admonish them*] *not to regard* Jewish *fables*[b], *and endless genealogies*, which, intricate as the investigation of them is, the Judaizing teachers are so fond to trace, as thinking so many privileges to depend upon them, *which* indeed *afford matter of* troublesome and angry *debates, rather than godly edification in the faith* of Christ, or in any of the duties of an

4 Neither give heed to fables, and endless genealogies; which minister questions, rather than godly edifying, which is in faith: so *do*.

5 holy life. *But* let it always be remembered and considered, that *the* great *end of the* gospel-*declaration is* to promote in the mind a temper directly opposite to this, even a principle of *love*, and all the genuine expressions of it that can proceed *from a pure heart and a good conscience*, supported *and* animated by *an undissem-*

5 Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and *of* a good conscience, and *of* faith unfeigned.

6 *bled faith* in the great doctrines it reveals. But these are noble and generous things, from *which, some having* greatly *wandered, have turned aside to vain* and empty *discourse* and harangue, which could have no tendency to edification, but only express their own pride and folly, and

6 From which some having swerved, have turned aside unto vain jangling;

7 feed that of others. *Desiring to be teachers of the law*, and assuming as magisterial airs as any of its professed doctors can do[c], and yet in the mean

7 Desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what

b *Jewish fables.*] To what a monstrous degree these fables are brought by the rabbies, few are entirely ignorant, though few are so unhappy as fully to know. It is probable, this wild romantic humour might in some measure prevail as early as the *apostle's* days, and may be referred to here. By the *genealogies* afterwards mentioned, I do not, with some commentators, understand the *æons* of the gnostics, but *tables of lineal descent*, by which the Jews endeavoured to prove their right as priests and Levites, or their alliance to the house of David, all which were apparently vain, in the circumstances in which the Jews then were, and in those to which every Christian knew they must quickly be reduced.

c *Teachers of the law.*] The word is here νομοδιδασκαλοι, which we render in the evangelists, *doctors of the law*; and though it is not used exactly in that sense here, yet there seems to be some reference to it. This is urged as an argument, that the *false teachers* here referred to could not be the gnostics, who declared an aversion to the *law*; not to insist on the agreement of Irenæus, Clement, and Jerom, in placing

what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

mean time, *neither understanding what they say, nor concerning what they* so confidently *affirm*, while they vent these precarious fancies of their own, as if they were indubitable and self-evident truths, the first principles of all science, human or divine.

SECT. i.

1 Tim. i. 7.

8 But we know that the law *is* good, if a man use it lawfully;

But while I say this, I am very far from having the least design to reflect upon the law of Moses, or upon the precepts of God's natural law: for *we* well *know that the law* [*is*] good and *excellent*, reasonable in its constitution, and most profitable in its tendency, *if a man use it lawfully* [d], and according to its original intention. 8

9 Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers,

As *knowing this, that a law*, established, as we know that in question to be, with penal sanction, *is not made in* a direct and immediate *reference to a righteous man* [e], who will indeed be a law to himself; *but* in order *to* restrain the irregularities and enormities of *the lawless and ungovernable*, and to preserve society from their assaults. Of these it speaks, to these it directs its menacing voice, even to *the impious and* [*profligate*] *sinners*, to *the unholy and profane*, who disregard the rights both of God and man, to *murderers of fathers and of mothers*, or other *assassins*. 9

10 For whoremongers, for them that defile

To *fornicators and Sodomites*, to *those who steal men*, that they may sell them for slaves, 10

ing Valentinus, Carprocates, and Basilides, the founders of that *sect*, much lower.

d *If a man use it lawfully.*] This plainly intimates, that there were some who abused the *law*, borrowing a pretence from it to condemn some of the best of men, and to subvert the *gospel*. And whereas some had represented Paul as an *enemy to the law*, he here denies and disproves the charge. The design of the Mosaic law was to direct the conduct of those to whom it was given, and to humble them under a sense of their sin, but it could not be intended to save them by a perfect conformity to it, which was το αδυνατον, *what the law could not do*. Rom. viii. 3.

e *A law is not made in reference to a righteous man.*] Δικαιω νομος ου κειται Some would render it, *does not lie against a righteous man*; but I do not find that this interpretation of the word κειται in this connection, can be justified by sufficient authority, nor would it be very easy to clear up the *apostle's* argument on that interpretation. The thought seems evidently to be this, That *a law* (for there is no article to determine or confine it to the Jewish) is chiefly intended to restrain men from actions injurious to the *public* What it says therefore chiefly relates to *crimes* and their *punishments*; but the genius of Christianity is so sublime, and the character of Christians in the general (at that time) so good, that there is no need of insisting on legal sentences denounced against such enormities, in order to keep them in the course of their duty. I can hardly think with Diodate and L'Enfant, that by the mention of these crimes he intimates, that their Jewish teachers were such *wretches* as those here spoken of, as if he had said, one of the chief uses of the *law* is to condemn such as *themselves*. Such monsters could never have maintained a party in *religion*, but he might choose these instances, as precepts of the law in particular lay against each of them, and as the discourses of these teachers might be a sort of *common place*, almost entirely levelled against the worst of crimes, and so less suited to the edification of believers. To inculcate it so much upon them, and especially to pretend to condemn them out of it, was therefore an *irregular* and improper use of the *law*.

SECT. i.

slaves. It addresses to *liars* and *perjured persons, and,* in a word, is intended to guard against *whatever is contrary to wholesome doctrine* and good morality, that it may restrain and controul the authors of mischief, and mark them out as the objects of universal abhorrence and just punishment. And these things are condemned by every Divine revelation, and by that which we teach in the strongest terms, *according to the* known tenor of the *glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I was intrusted.* This guards against the smallest deviation from the strictest rule of rectitude, and the secret abominations of the heart, as well as the grosser scandals of the life: so that for any out of pretended zeal for such a law to oppose the gospel, must certainly argue the greatest ignorance, or the greatest malice and hypocrisy, that can be conceived.

1 Tim. I. 10. file themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine,

11 11 According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. *CHRIST is* indeed *our hope*, or we have nothing which can
1 deserve to be called *hope*. *For in us he is the hope of glory*. On him therefore let us build, to him let us with the most joyful con-
4, 6 sent commit our souls, and, dismissing all *vain questionings* and *endless* unprofitable *controversies*, ever attend to *godly edifying*,
5 and bear in our memories and in our hearts the great *end of the commandment*. And may the great God of love, work that *love* in our hearts which is so justly represented in that view; love proceeding from a *good conscience, and from faith unfeigned.*

8 We rejoice in the *gospel*, and let us reverence the *law*, and endeavour to *use it lawfully* and properly. Let it regulate our lives; let it awaken our consciences, and lead us to look for a better righteousness than this alone can afford. Blessed be God, that it
9, 10 is providentially made the means of *restraining* many who act on motives merely *legal*, from much wickedness, which they might otherwise commit. But let the *glorious gospel of the blessed God, intrusted to the apostle*, be the great *foundation* on which our souls
11 build. It is *glorious* indeed: may the great Author of it ever be blessed, and the great end of it answered in our hearts, not only in preserving us free from those gross enormities of which the apostle has given so black a catalogue, and against which the *law* was more immediately directed, but in forming us to a stricter obedience, a sublimer purity, and more exalted hope, than any other *dispensation* which God himself has given could inspire.

SECT.

SECT. II.

The Apostle makes a digression to express, in lively terms, the affectionate sense he had of the Divine goodness, in calling him, though most undeserving that favour, to the Christian faith and ministerial office. 1 Tim. I. 12—17.

1 Tim. I. 12.
AND I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;

1 Timothy I. 12.

SECT. ii.

1 Tim. I. 12.

I HAVE just been mentioning the glorious gospel of the blessed God as committed to my trust, *and* as I always recollect that favour with pleasure, so *I* would now, in a particular manner, *return* my *thanks to Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath strengthened me* for the arduous duties of such a calling, *that he accounted me faithful,* and reposed so great a confidence in me, *putting me into the* sacred office of the *ministry; Who* 13 *was before a* most impious *blasphemer*[a] of his holy name, *and a* cruel *persecutor* of his people, *and an* injurious *oppressor* of them, in contempt of all rights, human and divine. *But I obtained* that *mercy,* which probably would never otherwise have been extended to me, *because* though I acted in a very rash, savage, and criminal manner, yet *I* did not therein contradict the sentiments of my conscience, but *did [it] ignorantly*[b] *in unbelief;* whereas if I had knowingly opposed what I apprehended to be truth, out of regard to secular interest, I should doubtless have been left to perish under a judicial blindness of mind and hardness of heart. *But* 14 *the grace of our* blessed *Lord superabounded* towards

13 Who was before a blasphemer and a persecutor, and injurious. But I obtained mercy, because I did *it* ignorantly, in unbelief:

14 And the grace of our

a *A blasphemer.*] He had the greater reason to acknowledge this *guilt,* as he had not only spoken evil of *Christ himself,* but encouraged and even compelled *others* to do so. Acts xxvi. 11.

b *Did it ignorantly.*] If Paul had an opportunity of knowing more than some others (compare Luke xxiii. 34), yet perhaps, being then a scholar at Gamaliel's feet, he might not have been present on the spot when any of Christ's miracles were performed, as Christ spent but little time at Jerusalem. The popular cry was so strongly against him, and the Pharisees and *rulers* treated him with so much contempt, and were so full of malignity against him, and so ready to advance the most *slanderous* reports to the prejudice of his character, that it is the less to be wondered at, that this rash hot youth was borne down by the torrent. Yet we see how far Paul was from thinking *all this,* and whatever could be added to it, a *sufficient* excuse. Instead of insinuating with some, that the miracle wrought for his conversion to Christianity was a *reward* for his extraordinary integrity and virtue, while a Jewish zealot, he speaks of himself as one of the *greatest* sinners upon earth; and thereby, shews, by the way, how much *guilt* a man may contract without acting directly contrary to the *convictions* of his mind, if he has neglected an *impartial* care in forming his principles of action.

SECT. ii.

wards me, being attended *with* the exercise of *faith and love which is in Christ Jesus*, and which by the influence of his Spirit and grace was implanted in my heart, thereby giving life and joy to my profession.

our Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

1 Tim. 1. 14.

15 I cannot therefore but mention *this*, as what [*is*] *a* most *faithful* infallible *saying*, *and worthy of all acceptance*, of being universally received and admitted by every one who hears it, and of being welcomed to the heart, as well as gaining the assent of the understanding, *that Christ Jesus*, the eternal Son of God, though originally possessed of Divine glory with the Father, *came* with infinite condescension *into the world* in which we dwell, *that he might save* from final condemnation and ruin miserable *sinners; of whom* it becomes me ever with all humility to confess that *I am chief*. For surely there never was, nor ever will be, a display of richer and more sovereign grace than that which recovered and transformed me. *But* it was in a great measure *for this cause* that *I obtained* the *mercy* of which I was so unworthy, *that in me, as the chief* of sinners, *Jesus Christ might* display, and, as it were, *exhibit*, to the view of the whole world an example of *all long suffering*, *as a pattern for* the encouragement of *those who should afterwards believe on him*, even to the remotest ages of time, in order *to* the obtaining *eternal life*. And *now*, when I consider it in this view, I cannot forbear bursting out into a song of praise, and saying, *to the* supreme *King* of universal nature, who reigns through all the unknown extent of boundless ages, and unmeasurable space, who is possessed of *eternal* glory and *immortal* life, though *invisible* to mortal eves; even to *the only wise*, living and true *God*, [*be*] *honour and glory for ever and ever*, for this and every other display of a wisdom unsearchable, and a goodness inexhaustible! *Amen.*

15 This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

16 Howbeit, for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, *be* honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

IMPROVEMENT.

WHO can wonder, that a person of *Paul's* experience and piety, should thus, on the mention of the *gospel*, digress to indulge his reflections on that singular and astonishing interposition of Divine grace, by which he had been brought to embrace it, and honoured with the charge of it! Who can wonder, that such

such *blasphemies*, and such *outrages* as he had uttered and committed, such a zeal for *persecution* as he had exerted, should leave a deep impression on his heart, and engage him, notwithstanding all his care in the externals of the law, and *blameless* as he was *touching* all *its righteousness*, to call himself *the first*, the *chief of sinners*, and to celebrate that as *superabundant grace*, which had been extended to him! SECT. ii. Ver. 13 14

Well was he, who had received it, thereby fitted to proclaim it to all the world. Let us gladly receive it from the pen of this once malignant and blasphemous persecutor, but now holy and happy *apostle*, as a most *certain truth, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus*, the Son of God, hath, in unutterable and inconceivable compassion, *come into this world* of ours *to save sinners*, even *the chief* of them. Let us thankfully accept this *abridgment* of the whole gospel, and apply to the Saviour thus triumphant in *mercy*, with whatever aggravated guilt our consciences may charge us. Let us also remember, that *Paul obtained mercy* not on his own account alone, but that the compassions extended to him might be considered as an *example* of what this gracious Redeemer is ready to extend *to all them who*, like him, *shall believe*. Let us pause upon it, till our hearts glow within us in all thankful acknowledgment of his mercy, and then let our lips burst forth in praise *to the King eternal, immortal, and invisible*, to *the only wise God*, who hath found out such an admirable way at once to glorify his *justice* and his *grace*, in pardoning and accepting *the chief of sinners* in his Son. May our hearts be more and more disposed to celebrate his power, wisdom, and goodness, and to begin those songs of praise upon earth, which we hope will be our everlasting employment in heaven! 15 16 17

SECT. III.

The Apostle, after recommending to Timothy a conscientious care in the whole of his behaviour, gives and enforces several directions relating to prayer, and to the conduct of women professing godliness. 1 Tim. I. 18—*to the end, and* chap. II. *throughout.*

1 Tim. I. 18.

THIS charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the

1 Timothy I. 18.

THIS charge which I am now going to give, *I* solemnly *commit unto thee*, my *son Timothy*, as a matter of the highest importance to thy usefulness and success in the ministerial office. As indeed there is nothing which I more earnestly desire, than *that thou mayest, according to former prophecies concerning thee*, with which holy SECT. iii. 1 Tim. I. 18.

SECT. iii.

holy men of God, who knew thee in younger life, were inspired (being animated *by* a cheerful and believing remembrance of *them,*) *maintain* with holy alacrity and resolution *a good warfare*, even that noble and glorious struggle in which thou art engaged, under thy Christian, and especially thy ministerial character, against those enemies that oppose the gospel, and the salvation of men. Go on therefore resolutely, *retaining* the great principles of the Christian *faith*[a], *and* with it the exercise of *a good conscience: which* last *some having thrust away*, and obstinately opposed its just dictates and remonstrances, *concerning faith have made shipwreck* upon the rocks of surrounding temptations, and so have lost all that precious treasure, by which, had it been wisely guarded and improved, they might have been for ever rich and happy. *Of which* [*number*], among others, *is Hymenæus and Alexander*[b], with *whom* thou Timothy art not unacquainted, and who once professed a great regard to the gospel; but they are now turned apostates, and have behaved in so outrageous a manner, that *I have*, according to that extraordinary apostolic power with which God hath invested me for such purposes, solemnly *delivered* them both over *unto Satan, that they may learn*, by what they now suffer in their afflicted and diseased bodies, *not to blaspheme* the truths of Christ, or to revile his faithful servants, in such profane and wicked language as they have sometimes used when speaking of them.

1 Tim. I. 18. the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;

19 Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck:

20 Of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

II. 1 But I will proceed in the charge which I proposed to address to thee, that, by a diligent and vigorous performance of thy duty, thou mayest be secure from falling into that miserable state in which thou seest others who once seemed to set out well. *I exhort* thee *therefore, first*, as it is

II. 1. I exhort therefore,

a *Faith.*] As it is here distinguished from a *good conscience*, it is plain that *faith* here signifies, *an assent to the truth of Christianity*, and consequently all arguments drawn from hence, against the doctrine of the *perseverance* of the saints, must be very inconclusive.

b *Hymenæus and Alexander.*] Probably this Alexander is the person mentioned Acts xix. 33, who might become worse and worse after Paul's departure from Ephesus, emboldened by his absence; so that the apostle might now be determined to *deliver him up to Satan*, to inflict upon him certain pains and evils, which might possibly reclaim him. Compare 2 Tim. iv. 14, and *note* there. Mr. *Reynolds* justly and finely observes (*Letter to a Deist*, p. 256,) that when the *apostles* mention the names of *apostates*, and censure them with such freedom and severity, it affords a plain argument that they knew themselves to be entirely out of their power: for if they had been conscious of any thing to be feared from *their discovery*, they would have endeavoured to manage them more *artfully*, that they might not provoke them to the uttermost.

c *Supplications*

fore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks, be made for all men.

2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

3 For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour:

4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

5 For *there is* one God,

SECT. iii.

1 Tim. II. 1.

is a duty of great importance in itself and highly subservient to thy success in every other branch of this office, *that* earnest *supplications*[c], repeated *prayers*, affectionate *intercessions*, [*and*] cheerful *thanksgivings, be made* by thee, and those whose devotions may in any degree fall under thy direction, *for all men*, for the whole human race, whether Jew or Gentile, Christian or Pagan, friends or enemies: And particularly 2 *for kings, and all who are in* any *exalted stations* of life; that their hearts may be so influenced, as at least to tolerate the gospel, *that we* who are by the principles of our religion taught to abhor every thing which would be injurious to them, *may* not be injured by them, but may be permitted to *pass a peaceful and quiet life*, while we are desirous to conduct ourselves, not only without offence, but in a useful and exemplary manner, *in all piety and gravity*, attentive to the several duties which we owe both to God and our fellow-creatures. *For this* [*is*] *good and* 3 *acceptable in the sight of our Saviour God*, who is the great Guardian of the rights of society, and never meant to encourage his ministers or people to violate or disturb it out of any pretences of a religious nature: *Who* indeed *wills* 4 *that all men should be saved*[d], *and come to the acknowledgment of the truth* of his gospel, which they will be most likely to do, if they see the professors of it behaving in the manner I now recommend, and avoiding all occasions either of public or private offence. Let us therefore 5 accustom ourselves to take proper views both of God and of mankind, *for* it is the grand fundamental

c *Supplications be made.*] That any man should ever have understood this *phrase* as a charge given to Timothy to *compose a liturgy* for the use of the *clergy* and *people of Ephesus*, appeared very surprising to me, when I saw it quoted from one Erasmus Warren, by Mr. Pierce: (*Vind.* p. 411): but that the great and good Bishop *Bull* should have given so unnatural a turn to the phrase, as I find he has done in his *Posthumous Sermons*, Vol. II. No. 13, p. 543, &c. was such an instance of weak attachment to *party prejudices*, as is almost ready to make me *weep*.

d *Will have all men to be saved.*] It is far from being my design, in any of these *notes*, to enter deep into *controversy*, but I must confess I have never been satisfied with that interpretation which explains *all men* here merely as signifying *some* of all sorts and ranks of men; since I fear it might also be said, on the principles of those who are fondest of this gloss, that he also *wills all men to be condemned*. On the other hand, if *many* are not saved, it is certain the words must be taken with some limitation, which the following clause, he wills their *coming to the knowledge of the truth*, must also prove. The meaning therefore seems to be, that God has made *sufficient* provision for the salvation of *all*, and that it is to be considered as the *general* declaration of his will, that *all* who know the truth themselves, should publish it to all around them, so far as their influence can extend.

e *The*

SECT. iii.

mental principle of our religion, that [*there is*] *one God*, the Creator of all, the gracious Father of all his creatures, who is no respecter of persons, *and one Mediator between God and men*, even *the man Christ Jesus*[e], who hath not undertaken to plead for this or that nation or party of men alone, but whose kind office in the court of heaven, where he now dwells, extends in some degree to the whole human race, and who refuses not the blessings he has procured to any that with sincerity and humility cast themselves upon him. Let us make his extensive grace familiar to our mind, and live and act as those who remember our relation to that Saviour, *who gave himself a ransom for all*, so that no nation, no rank, no condition of men are excluded from the benefit of his death; *to be attested in due time* to the most distant regions of the world, that they may be called to put in their claim for that pardon and salvation which he hath purchased by his blood for all those who should believe in him.

1 Tim. ii. 5. God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

7 This is the declaration of that glorious gospel, *of which I was appointed an herald*, to proclaim the grace of it all abroad, *and* was sent forth as *an apostle*, to attest that great and essential doctrine of it, the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. *(I speak the truth in Christ*[f], as thou Timothy well knowest. *I lie not* in pretending to such an extraordinary mission), and I was not only in general ordained to this ministry, but by peculiar destination was appointed to be *a teacher of the Gentiles in* this holy *faith, and* in the whole system of *truth* which it comprehends.

7 Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not,) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.

8 *I therefore* give it in charge to them, and to thee, with that authority which it becomes one who is so expressly called to this high office; and I *will* in particular, *that*, as prayer is so important a duty, *men pray in every place*, that over all the world, and not only in the temple, or synagogues

8 I will therefore that men pray everywhere,

e *The man Christ Jesus.*] Though the union of the *Divine* nature with the *human*, qualified Christ for the office of Mediator, yet I think this plainly shews, that it is in his *human* nature we are to consider him as discharging it.

f *I speak the truth in Christ, &c.*] Paul uses such solemnity in asserting this doctrine, as the Jews were so much averse to it, and were ready to charge his preaching the gospel among the Gentiles, either upon the want of a due regard to his own nation, or some view of avarice or ambition; looking on the Gentiles as most detestable creatures, and probably growing more inveterate against them, in proportion to the degree in which they were compelled to permit them to dwell in their own *holy land*, and often to associate themselves with them.

where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting:

gogues of the Jews, it be performed; in public assemblies, in families, and in secret retirements. And let them not only be taught in the general to perform it, but instructed as to the particular manner of doing it, that they may still be *holding up holy hands*[g], undefiled with any pollution and cruelty, sensuality, or unrighteous gain. Let it also be performed *without wrath*, with the most placid and composed mind, and most mild and benevolent affection, *and* without *doubting*[h] too, with a lively faith in the power and wisdom, the goodness and faithfulness of God, and a cheerful dependance on all those gracious promises by which he encourages our addresses.

SECT. iii.

1 Tim. II. 8.

9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety: not with broidered hair or gold, or pearls, or costly array;

In like manner[i] [*I* would *charge*] the *women also*, who are to be considered as comprehended in the former precepts, that they be particularly careful *to adorn themselves*[k] only *with decent apparel, with modesty and sobriety*, neither exceeding in the article of unnecessary and inconvenient expence, nor in the least degree intrenching on the strictest decorum. I have many reasons, both relating to themselves and others, to wish that they may *not* place their ornament so much *in plaited hair, or gold, or pearls, or* rich and *costly garments*; *But in what* is itself infinitely more valuable, and much better *becomes women professing godliness*, and the gospel of Christ as the great rule of it, *in good works*: which will render them amiable in the eyes of God himself, and of all wise and virtuous persons with whom they converse. They

9

10 But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.

10

g *Lifting up holy hands.*] The expression of *holy hands* may allude to the custom of *washing their hands* before solemn prayer, which has prevailed not only among the Jews, but among heathens and Mahometans, that they might hereby express their desire of inward *purity*. And the caution against *wrath* might be more suitable, as the many injuries which the Christians received from their *persecutors* might tempt them to some imprecations against them, not agrecable to the gentle and benign genius of their religion. And would to God this might always be considered, that they who are to lead the devotions of others in *free prayer*, may not mingle their own angry and irregular passions with their addresses; than which I assuredly believe, scarce any thing can be more displeasing to God, more reproachful to Christian assemblies, or more scandalously offensive to persons of a right temper and disposition.

h *Without doubting.*] Some would render χωρις διαλογισμων, *without debating*, or disputing; but I think the more common interpretation preferable, as it suggests another very important thought, that is, the necessity of *faith* in prayer, according to the account given of it in the *paraphrase*.

i *In like manner.*] Some explain this, as referring to what was to be attended to in their *assemblies*; but I think it evident that it refers to the charge the *apostle* had given to Timothy with such solemnity, in the beginning of the preceding sentence.

k *Adorn themselves*, &c.] Estius very justly observes, that this discourse concludes with yet stronger force against *foppery in men*.

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They will no doubt be diligent in frequenting the public worship of God in your assemblies.

1 Tim. II. 11. And *let the woman* there *learn in silence, with all* becoming *submission* to those who associate, and with the regard due to such a congregation.

11 Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.

12 *But I permit not a woman to teach* publicly, *nor to usurp authority over a man,* which she might seem to do, by officiating under the character of a preacher. *But,* on the contrary, I charge her

12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

13 *to be in silence* at such a time. And indeed this is agreeable to what was intimated at the beginning of the world, and which passed in the earliest scenes of it. *For Adam was formed* the *first* [1] of the human species, from the dust of the earth, being under God, its acknowledged lord and proprietor, and *then* no suitable companion being found for him, among all the creatures which came to pay him their homage, *Eve* was produced, from a rib taken out of his side, and presented as one whom God intended for a partner and helper to him. Gen. ii. 18—22.

13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve.

14 *And* it is farther to be recollected, that at the fatal entrance of sin into the world, *Adam was not* immediately *deceived* [m] by the fraud of the serpent, *but* that artful seducer chose to begin his attack on *the woman*, who *being deceived* by him, *was* first *in the transgression*, and prevailed upon Adam by her solicitations to offend. Now it should be an humbling consideration to all her daughters, that their sex was so greatly interested in the introduction of guilt and misery, and make them less forward in attempting to be guides

14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

1 *Adam was formed the first.*] It is plain the *apostle* does not mean to put the whole of his argument upon the *priority* of the man's creation, in point of time, for on that principle the *birds* and *beasts* would have the pre-eminence even to Adam. But he refers only to the *human* species, and to the regard which God expresses for the ease and comfort of *man*, by making the *woman* to be his companion and assistant. So that it is the same thought in fewer words, which is expressed more largely, 1 Cor. xi. 8, 9. *The man was not created for the woman, but the woman for the man,* and this I have endeavoured to express in the *paraphrase*.

m *Adam was not* immediately *deceived.*] Diodate observes here, that the *sacred history* does not say that the man was deceived at all, thereby perhaps intimating his apprehension, as Milton long afterward represented it, that Adam, out of an excessive tenderness for his wife, offended against his better knowledge, at her persuasion, without expecting such effects from the *forbidden fruit* as she did. But certainly this is making the matter much worse on the *man's* side than on the *woman's*. I rather think the *apostle* hereby intimates, that the tempter chose to make his first attack on the *woman*, as in her original and most glorious state *the inferior*, and consequently less fit in future life to take the lead in important affairs. As it seems in the general reasonable to suppose, that much the same proportion of understanding may be observed in the respective *sexes*, and though there may be some excepted cases, yet that they are not so many as to affect the main force of the argument.

n *Child-birth.*]

15 Notwithstanding, she shall be saved in child-bearing, if they continue in faith and charity, and holiness with sobriety.

guides to others, after such a miscarriage. *Yet* let them not be despised or upbraided on this account, considering on the other side, that *she* was also happily instrumental in producing the great promised Seed, (Gen. iii. 15,) who was derived from a woman without any human father ; and so they *shall be saved*, as I may say, *by child-birth*[n]: if there be a suitable readiness, not only to profess, but to obey the gospel; and *if they continue* constant *in* the exercise of *faith, and love, and holiness, with* that *sobriety* of temper and conduct which I have now been recommending, and which both religion and prudence concur to recommend to all, and to that sex in particular.

SECT. iii.

1 Tim. II. 15.

IMPROVEMENT.

MAY every Christian learn by these apostolical dictates to *retain faith and a good conscience*, and be very solicitous that no exactness in the former be thought sufficient to compensate for a defect in the latter. Soon will that *faith* itself suffer *shipwreck*, where a *good conscience* sits not at the helm ; or rather soon will it serve only as a talent of gold, to a man sinking in the sea, to plunge him so much the deeper. It will be a part of the character of one who desires to preserve a good conscience, to maintain *a benevolence* of heart towards the *whole human race*, and to breathe out that benevolence in *prayer* which at the same time expresses and increases it. And while *all men* have a share in it, *kings and princes*, in whose behaviour and temper the happiness of so many thousands are concerned, have a peculiar claim to

Chap. i. 19.

Chap. ii. 1.

2

n *Child-birth.*] I have taken what on attentive deliberation seemed the most probable *sense* of this much controverted and very obscure scripture ; and it is that in which the learned and judicious Dr. *William Harris* acquiesces. (*Har. on Mess.* p. 54,) Mr. Locke (on Rom. vii. 5,) understands it, of being *carried safely through child-bearing*, as the like expression, σωθησηται δια τεκνογονιας, seems to signify, 1 Cor. iii. 15,) see the *note* there,) which sense Dr. Whitby endeavours to illustrate at large : not indeed as an *absolute* promise, which fact shews it is not ; but as a general *intimation*, that pious women might cheerfully commit themselves to God, in the hour of nature's distress, if they trusted in God, maintaining *charity*, withal, persevering in *chastity*, and strictly adhering to the laws of *temperance* in every other respect. Mr. Pyle, from 1 Tim. iv. 3, v. 10.—Concludes, that the *apostle* refers to some of those *false teachers* that condemned *marriages as unlawful*, or at least comparatively *unclean*. But I can by no means acquisesce in either of these senses ; nor suppose, as some others have done, that τεκνογονια signifies the *education of children :* though I am very sensible, a due care in that respect is one of the most *important* duties and services which can be imagined to come within the verge of *female* life.

* The

SECT. iii.

to our devout remembrance. Above all, let us pray for *our own*, that they may continue, as blessed be God his *present majesty*, hath long been *, and we have reason to hope his successors will be, *the ministers of God for good.* *May our life*, under such a government, be in one sense as well as another *quiet and peaceable*, and may it be conducted *in all godliness and honesty.* Thus shall

Ver. 4 we do our part to subserve that gracious *will of God*, to effect which he hath done all that it was proper for him to do, that *all men may be saved*, as our *walking in the truth* may bring many *to the knowledge of it.* May that knowledge prevail more and more 5 in the world, that the *one God* may be universally adored, through the *one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus*, in whom Deity dwells, and whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, we worship, as exalted above all adoration and praise.

7 This only begotten Son of God became a *man*, that he might give himself a *ransom for us, a ransom for all* who should believe in him. Blessed be God, that we have received this important testimony, received it from *Paul the apostle*, received it from that faithful *herald* of such astonishing grace, who was divinely *appointed to be a teacher of the Gentiles*, and who to this day is teaching us by his *writings*, and in every section of them giving us lessons of infinite importance.

8 May we learn, from what he teaches us here, not only the *object* to whom our prayers are to be directed, and *the persons* for whom they are to be offered, but likewise *the temper* from which they are to proceed. May our *hands be holy*, and our hearts overflowing with *love*, and firmly established in *faith* unfeigned, resting on the promises we plead, and rejoicing in an assured hope, that the *eternal* JEHOVAH, who so long since styled himself *the hearer of prayer*, (Psal. lxv. 2,) will not now say to any humble and upright souls, *Seek ye me in vain.* In all our conduct, let us remember we are in his presence, and let a concern to please him, and to adorn our profession, run through every action of our lives. Let 9 it direct our expences and our *dress.* Let it engage us to maintain a constant *decorum* in every circumstance, sacred or civil; to 15 be in a due *subjection* to our superiors, and to continue in *faith and love, in holiness and sobriety.*

13 Let the *sex*, to whom the concluding instructions of this *section* are peculiarly addressed, while they are humbled in the remembrance of that original *offence*, in which *Eve*, our first mother so unhappily

* The *author* had the happiness to write this in the *twenty-fourth year of* King George II. that father of his people, *by whom we enjoy great quietness, and by whose providence very worthy deeds are done unto this nation, which we* should *accept always, and in all places, with all thankfulness.*

a *The*

unhappily led the way, rejoice in the great victory of the *seed of the woman* over the *serpent*. And let the *other* sex, on which this was bestowed as a gift of so great value, that God judged it necessary to complete the felicity of *paradise* in its untainted bloom, never manifest the odious effects of the *fall*, by ungenerously upbraiding the *daughters* for the *mother's* fault, at the distance of so many generations; but rather rejoice, that, as by *woman* came *transgression*, so by her came *redemption* too. And let us all join in improving so invaluable a favour, and endeavouring to express our gratitude for it, by acting aright, according to the several *relations* which we sustain in life.

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15

14

SECT. IV.

The Apostle instructs Timothy in the qualifications to be attended to in those who were to be set apart to the office of a pastor, and deacon in the church. 1 Tim. III. 1—13.

1 TIM. III. 1.

THIS *is* a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

1 TIMOTHY III. 1.

SECT. iv.

1 Tim. III. 1.

[*IT is*] *a faithful saying*, most certain in itself, and worthy of being always acknowledged and attended to, that, *if any one earnestly desireth the episcopal* or pastoral *office, he desireth a good work.* To feed the church of Christ, and to take the oversight of it, is indeed a very laborious employment; but it is also very honourable, and greatly tends to advance the glory of God, and to promote the good of mankind, if it be discharged in a proper manner. *A bishop therefore*, or an overseer of the flock of Christ, *must be blameless* in every respect, with regard to his moral character, since any thing which may be amiss in him will tend to bring a reproach upon his office, and greatly to obstruct his usefulness. It is particularly requisite that if he be a married man, he should be *the husband of* only *one wife*[a]; for if he have more than

2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour,

2

a *The husband of one wife.*] Mr. Hallet and Mr. Whiston both infer from hence, that *second marriages* are unlawful to the *clergy*; and the Muscovites suppose that one wife is so necessary, that no man can become a bishop till he be married, nor continue to exercise that office longer than his wife lives. *Pery's Russia*, p. 230. But circumstances may be so adjusted, that there may be as much reason for a *second* marriage as for the *first*, and as little inconvenience of any kind may attend it. Upon the whole, therefore, it seems to me most reasonable to believe, that (as there is no express precept in the Bible, requiring a man who had several wives at the time of his embracing Christianity, to divorce or dismiss all but one) the Divine wisdom might judge that it was a proper medium, between encouraging *polygamy*, and too great a rigour in *condemning* it, to fix such a brand of infamy on this irregular practice

SECT. iv.

than one at a time, or have divorced a former without sufficient excuse, and taken another during her life, it is an irregularity by no means to be countenanced in a person from whom it is natural to expect such exemplary purity of manners. It is also necessary that he be *watchful*, and not one of a slothful and indolent temper, who would sleep over so high and sacred a charge; that he be *prudent* and steady in his behaviour, regular and *decent*, guarding against those little indecorums which expose men to contempt, even where there is nothing grossly vicious in their conduct. And it is particularly desirable, that he be *given to hospitality*[b]; as Christians, who travel from one place to another, will naturally go to the minister's house, if they are strangers in the place, and expect, on account of their common profession, to be received there. He must also be a person of such natural abilities, and so instructed in the doctrines of Christianity, as that he should be *fit to teach*[c] publicly, as well as to preside in other respects. *Not one that sitteth long over wine*, or any other kind of strong liquor, *or* that has so little government of himself, as to be *ready to strike* those that displease him. He must *not* be *attached to* any method of *sordid* and dishonourable *gain*[d], *but* must be *moderate* in all his desires and passions, *not given to contention, not a lover of money*, so as to take a pleasure in hoarding it up, even if it be justly and properly

1 Tim. III. 2. behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;

tice, by prohibiting any man, let his character be ever so extraordinary, to undertake the *ministry*, while he had more than *one wife*, and to discourage it in those already converted by such passages as Mat. xix. 9, and 1 Cor. vii. 2.

b *Given to hospitality.*] Let it be observed once for all, that as there were then in the *eastern* countries few houses of public entertainment, *hospitality* was a virtue more peculiarly seasonable and necessary than among us; I mean so far as it related to the accommodation of entire strangers on their *travels*.

c *Apt to teach.*] The bishop of Winchester lays some stress on our not meeting with any directions relating to *ordination* in this enumeration of the offices of a bishop, or presbyter; (for so candid and judicious a writer could not but acknowledge they are here words of the *same* signification.) But it is strange he should not have observed, that nothing is here said of *administring the sacraments*, which concur with many other circumstances to shew how far the *apostle* was from intending a full representation of all the pastoral duties. And it may be added, that the directions he afterwards gives to Timothy, on the head of *ordination*, may suggest instruction in this respect to all ministers. And it must be submitted to consideration, whether the omission of any charge to Presbyters, enjoining them to obey their bishop as a person of *superior* authority, does not weigh much more one way, than the omission pleaded above can avail the other. See *Hoadly of Episcop.* p. 390.

d *Attached to sordid gain.*] It is remarkable that this phrase is seldom or never used in the New Testament to express *any gain*, but that which is made or procured by the *covetousness of Christian ministers*; and never surely does an eagerness or greediness in pursuit of money appear more dishonourable and sordid than in persons of that noble, but alas! too often prostituted profession.

e *Who*

4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection, with all gravity;

properly his own. It is also evidently desirable, that he should be *one who presides well over his own house, having his children,* if he be a father, *in subjection with all gravity,* that their follies may not bring a reproach upon the family, and by consequence in some measure upon himself; SECT. iv. 1 Tim. III. 4.

5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

For if any one cannot preside over his own house, 5 in such a manner as to preserve a due decorum in the family, where he has such a natural authority, *how shall he* be able to *take care of the church of God*[e], where there will be such a diversity of persons and tempers, over which it will be impossible for him to maintain an equal inspection and influence? A bishop also should

6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

6 *not* be *one newly converted* to Christianity, *lest,* not having had a sufficient acquaintance with its principles, nor establishment in the duties it teaches, *he should be lifted up with pride,* in consequence of his distinguished character, and arrogate to himself an authority and dominion which God never intended for him. [*And*] should this be the case, *he* might easily *fall into the condemnation of the devil,* who was intoxicated with self-conceit, and so rose up into mad rebellion against God, that he might obtain that greater exaltation to which he imagined his own excellency gave him a claim[f]. *It is necessary* 7 *also,* in order to a pastor's filling up this important office with a becoming dignity, *that he have a good report of those that are without, lest he* should otherwise *fall into reproach, and* in consequence of that be taken in *the snare of the devil*[g], who will easily know how to graft temptations

7 Moreover, he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach, and the snare of the devil.

e *Who presides well over his own house,* &c.] Exactly parallel to this is a wise saying of *Confucius,* when directing princes to take care of their families: "It is impossible that he who knows not how to govern and reform his own *family,* should rightly govern and reform a people." *Conf. Mor.* p. 38.

f *Condemnation of the devil.*] Many have imagined that the first instance of Satan's pride was an affectation of *equality with God,* but others have thought that improbable, and have concluded it was the breach of some positive law, either relating to the manner in which God required to be worshipped, or the order and station of the angelic squadrons, or refusing some appointed *ministry* to some lower world, or rejecting the dominion of God's incarnate *Son,* who might in general be revealed as the future *Head* of angels as well as men. This last is the scheme which *Milton* prefers, and it is insisted upon at large in *Reyn. Quer. of the Ang. World, 2.* xvi. p. 13—28. But though it is certain the crime was *pride,* our conjectures may never be able to determine what was the particular instance: nor is the inquiry by any means necessary.

g *Snare of the devil.*] Some have explained the word διαβολος, of some human *slanderer,* but it seems to me much more natural to understand it in the sense it has just above, where I think it must signify, our great *infernal enemy.* And it is easy to see, that Satan might graft many dangerous temptations on the evil report which a man might have incurred by any *scandal,* before he entered on the *ministry;* either attempting to draw him to the *repetition* of former

SECT. iv.

tions upon that circumstance, to draw him aside one way or another, from that strictness and correctness of behaviour which suits his distinguished station.

1 Tim. III. 7.

8 This may suffice concerning the principal order of ministers in the church of Christ, bishops, pastors, or elders. *In like manner* [*let*] me now say something relating to *the* other order. I mean that of *deacons*, who are more immediately appointed to serve tables, and especially to take care of the poor. (Acts vi. 2.) Concerning these I would observe, that it is of importance, that they likewise [*be*] *grave* in their deportment, that they may avoid that contempt which the excesses of levity are ready to produce. They should *not* by any means be *double-tongued*, deceitful, or inconstant in their words, as they may chance to come into different companies; *nor addicted to much wine*, which will render them utterly unfit for their office; *nor greedy of dishonourable gain*, which may tempt them to violate their engagements to the church, and appropriate its stock lodged in their hands to private uses, rather than those charitable purposes for which it was collected. In one word, let them be persons well instructed in the doctrines of Christianity, and *retaining the* sublime and long concealed *mystery of* our holy *faith*, not merely as a point of speculation, but practice; and let it ever be held *in a pure* and undefiled *conscience*, and those only chosen into this office who seem conscientious men in the judgment of charity. *And let even these be first proved* and tried for a while, and *then*, *if they be* upon trial *found* to be *blameless*, *let them use the office of a deacon.*

8 Likewise *must* the deacons *be grave*, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre.

9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

10 And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being *found* blameless.

11 *In like manner*, [*let*] *the wives* of the deacons, and therefore much more of the bishops, [*be*] *grave* and sober in their deportment, *not* according to the example of the great enemy, that malignant spirit, who has his very name from thence, *false accusers* of the brethren and others. Let them also be *watchful* for occasions of doing good

11 Even so *must their* wives *be* grave, not

former evils, from an apprehension, that he had very little reputation to lose by a new fall, or weakening his hands in efforts of usefulness, by a fear, that the remembrance of those past irregularities would render his attempts less effectual. Thoughts worthy the consideration of all who design themselves for the ministry, and especially to be recollected, when persons, who have been remarkably profligate, are desirous of undertaking it, or returning to it.

not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.

good, and guard against every temptation to evil, and let them be *faithful in all things* which are committed to their care, lest their imprudent and unfaithful conduct should bring the character of their husbands under suspicion. SECT. iv. 1 Tim. III. 11.

12 Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well,

Let the deacons, as well as the bishops, *be the husbands of* only *one wife*, and let them be men of prudence and resolution, *governing their children and* other members of *their own houses well;* that no irregularity at home may disgrace the society they belong to. It is necessary to be thus cautious, though their ministry be but of an inferior rank, *for they who have discharged the office of a deacon well, procure to themselves*, not only a fair report in the general, but very often *a good degree*[h] of farther advancement in a higher office; *and* they lay a foundation for *great boldness in* professing *the faith which is in Christ Jesus.* Their acquaintance with the affairs of the church will render them more capable of defending it, than many others can. And the honourable testimony borne to their character, by advancing them to this trust, and continuing them in it, will also embolden them to plead more freely, and engage the more respectful attention. 12

13 For they that have used the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith, which is in Christ Jesus. 13

IMPROVEMENT.

THE teachers of others, and those who preside in the highest offices which *Christ* has founded in his *church*, may learn from this passage their duty as well as their dignity and honour. Let them remember, the work they have desired and engaged in is *a good work*. Let them think and speak, not arrogantly and tyrannically, but respectfully and solemnly of their office, and let them cultivate all these excellent qualities, which may fit them to discharge it aright; *sobriety* and *vigilance*, *gravity* and *hospitality*, the strictest *temperance*, the most diffusive *benevolence*. Let them rise far above those low views which are to worldly minded ministers the occasion of so many scandalous contentions, which so often establish a separate interest, and produce a secret and mutual aversion between them and their people. Ver. 1, 2, 3

Let

h *A good degree.*] As a learned education was not, in this age of extraordinary gifts, so necessary in the *superior* officers of the church, as it has since been; and as it is highly probable *deacons* might frequently officiate as occasional teachers in public assemblies: it might be matter of prudence, to choose their *elders* or *pastors* out of the *deacons*, to which the *apostle* here evidently refers.

SECT. IV.

Let the *churches* of *Christ* attend to this charge, to direct them in the choice of their *pastors;* and let *ministers* of standing and reputation, under whose guidance the matter may in part fall, be very careful that they do not encourage any to undertake the work who are deficient in these things: things of such importance, that it is certain no genius and learning can make up for the want of them. If *deacons*, in their inferior station, are to be free from such *stains*, and to be remarkable for such *virtues* as are here described, how much more should the *pastors* themselves be so, to whom the inspection of the *deacons* is also committed?

Ver. 12, 13

Let the *ministers of Christ* therefore study to excel in them more and more. And let such as are but lately entered on their work, though not *novices* in the language of the *apostle*, yet be on their guard, lest they be *lifted up with pride*, and so *fall into the condemnation of the devil.* But from this lurking and insinuating evil who is secure! Let all ministers learn to draw an occasion of exercising *humility*, from what might in another view seem a temptation to *vanity*, a survey of the dignity and excellency of their office. For how justly may this humble them when they reflect on the many imperfections which attend their discharge of it!

6

To conclude, let all, who are in any degree distinguished in the church, be excited to a care of *presiding* in a proper manner *over their own families:* and since it is evident that the *apostolic* rule allows of *marriage*, and supposes that, by whatever *doctrine of devils* it might be forbidden, it would generally be practised by the *ministers* of *Christ*, let them however take care to make choice of companions in conjugal life, who may adorn and bless the houses to which they belong, and lessen, rather than increase, the difficulties inseparable from their own station and office.

5, 15

SECT. V.

Though he hoped quickly to have an interview with Timothy, the Apostle recommends the care of the church to him; in which view he raises his idea of the charge he received, and represents the difficulties attending the faithful execution of it, in consequence of those pernicious doctrines which false teachers would endeavour to introduce. 1 Tim. III. 14—*to the end.* Chap. IV. 1—5.

1 TIMOTHY III. 14.

SECT. V.

THESE things which thou hast now been reading concerning the character of persons who are to be intrusted with the office of bishops

1 Tim. III. 14.

1 TIM. III. 14.

THESE things write I unto thee, hoping to

to come unto thee shortly:

15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

16 And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the

bishops and deacons, *I write to thee, hoping to come to thee shortly*[a]. *But if I delay*, I give thee these instructions, *that thou mayest know how it becomes thee to converse in the house of God*, in which thou hast the honour to bear so high an office; even in that house, *which is the church of the living God*. But I will not inculcate the matter farther, contenting myself with reminding thee, that *the* very *pillar and ground of* the whole system of gospel-*truth*[b], upon which the support of the entire edifice depends, *And* which is *confessedly great*, beyond all controversy and contradiction, *is the mystery of godliness*, that wonderful and sublime doctrine, which it is our great business to assert and enforce, and which has so evident a tendency to promote true godliness in all its branches; *God was manifested in the flesh* of our blessed Redeemer, in whose human nature the incarnate Deity dwelt; and thus he was *justified in* and by *the Spirit*, whose extraordinary communication, in the midst of all the meanness of human nature in its suffering state, vindicated his high claim, and marked him out, in the most illustrious manner, for the Divine Person he professed himself to be. He was *seen of angels*, and gazed at by them in various circumstances of his life and death, as a most astonishing and instructive spectacle. He was *preached among the Gentiles*, who were invited to embrace his religion, upon assurance of being received to equal privileges with the Jews. He was also *believed on in the world*, many of the most distant nations already coming in to the Christian

SECT. V.

1 Tim. III. 15.

16

a *Hoping to come to thee shortly.*] It seems evident from hence, that Paul intended to have come back to Timothy at Ephesus in a little time, but was providentially called another way; but it can by no means be concluded from hence (as has been shewn in the introduction), that Paul wrote this *epistle* to Timothy after his first *imprisonment* at Rome.

b *The pillar and ground of truth.*] Though it is, as Dr. Lightfoot has observed, very true, that this *title* is sometimes given by the *rabbies* to the members of the great *sanhedrim*, at least when assembled together, yet no interpretation of this *text* seems more precarious than that which refers it to the *church*. That had just before been called a *house*, and therefore cannot naturally be called a *pillar*, or *foundation*. Yet if it were to be granted, it would only prove, that the church was to *support* Christianity from age to age (which it has certainly done), not that any *particular* church is infallible. But it is well known, that many good *critics* refer this descriptive clause to Timothy, agreeably to that figure by which Peter is called a *pillar*, Gal. ii. 9. Compare Rev. iii. 12. But, I think, had this been the construction, the *accusative case* would have been used to agree with σε understood. I therefore choose to end the sentence with the word ζωντος, and begin the next with στυλος, as in the *version* and *paraphrase*; and then the whole *system* of evangelical *truth* is considered as resting on this *pillar* and *basis*, as εδραιωμα may signify.

c In

SECT. V.

Christian profession, and pressing for a share in the benefit of it. And at length, when his ministry on earth was completed, he was *received up into glory*, and seated on a throne in the heavens, where he presides over all things for the good of his church, and answers nobler purposes with regard to it than his corporeal presence here could have done.

1 Tim. III. 16.

the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

IV. 1 These great doctrines of our holy faith are worthy of being recollected by every Christian, and of being insisted upon by every minister. *But the Spirit* of Divine inspiration, in the scriptures of truth[c], and in evangelical prophets, particularly in me, *expressly saith* and testifies, *that in the last times*[d], in ages yet to come, *some*, who are under the dispensation of the gospel, and make great pretences to zeal in its interests, *shall apostatize from* the purity of *the* original *faith; giving heed to deceitful spirits*, who shall endeavour to impose upon them by false, though specious appearances, *and* to various *doctrines of demons*[e], and particularly such doctrines relating to the spirits of dead men, as the devil, the 2 great author and abetter of lies, shall suggest to them for the most pernicious purposes. For they will come to be worshippers of dead idols, and departed spirits; as in Israel also they worshipped them; *through the hypocrisy of* the most abandoned and shameless *liars*[f], spreading their errors

IV. 1. Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.

2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their

c In the scriptures of truth, &c.] I have paraphrased this *clause* in its greatest extent, because, as there are some passages in the Old Testament which have been supposed, though I think not very expressly, to look this way, it is highly probable that others, who had the *gift of prophecy* (as we are sure many at that time had), might predict so memorable and important an event as Paul certainly had done before. See 2 Thess. ii. 1, &c. But the inspiration of the New Testament in general rests on much stronger evidence than what arises from this clause.

d *In the last times.*] Though it is certain, that (as Dr. Whitby here proves at large) the phrase of the *last days* does often signify the concluding period of the Jewish church, and the first age of Christianity; yet I cannot perceive, that it is so confined to this, but that the whole period, or time under the reign of the Messiah, may be spoke of in this language.

e *Doctrines of demons.*] Archbishop *Tillotson* follows Mr. Joseph Mede in explaining this, as expressing *worship paid to* the spirits of *the dead*. *Tillotson's Works*, Vol. II. p. 53. But, though this be undoubtedly one branch of that *diabolical* doctrine which the church of Rome hath followed, I see no sufficient reason for limiting the phrase to that detestable tenet.

f *Through the hypocrisy of liars*, &c.] A very ingenious critic (many of whose remarks on scripture deserve attention) has urged the authority of Epiphanius, for inserting into the former part of this verse the following words, as spoken by the apostle, Εσονται γαρ νεκροις λαλουντες, ως και εν τω Ισραηλ εσεβασθησαν. *Epiph. Hær.* 78, p. 1055. *Ed. Col.* But the credit of *one copy* cannot be so considerable, as to warrant such an *addition* to the sacred text especially considering how *late* that citation was made, and how absolutely impossible it would have been, after the time of Epiphanius, to have corrected all the copies, by erasing from them these words, of which no trace is any where else to be found. I rather think that this father, very far, to be sure, from being a correct writer, has confounded

their conscience seared with a hot iron;

errors under pretence of sanctity; *whose own conscience is* so *seared* and cauterized, that they feel no manner of remorse for the grossest frauds, by which they impose on the weak and credulous with impious pretences to a Divine revelation. They will indeed endeavour to gain the good opinion of men, as persons of extraordinary sanctity and mortification; in this view *requiring*, especially from the ministers of Christ, *abstinence from marriage*[g], as as if it were an impure state, [*and*] less pleasing to God than that of celibacy. They will also urge men *to refrain from* various kinds of *meats, which God*, the bountiful Former of all things, *hath created* for our nourishment and entertainment, *to be received with thanksgiving by the faithful, and by those who know the truth*, and so are instructed to place religion, not in such indifferent things as these, but in things more truly excellent and worthy of God. *For*, whatever these deceivers may suggest, and however they may misrepresent the matter, *every creature of God [is] good, and nothing [is] to be rejected* under a colour of scrupling the lawfulness of it, [*provided it be*] *received with thanksgiving; For it is* in that case *sanctified by the word of God*, which allows the use, *and* by *prayer*, which draws down a blessing upon it. And when persons attend to the instructions of God's word, and maintain converse with him by prayer, seeking thereby in particular his blessing upon their food, they may indifferently use on any days all kinds of wholesome nourishment, not excepting those which were most strictly forbidden by the Mosaic law, for reasons peculiar to

SECT. V.

1 Tim. IV. 2.

3 Forbidding to marry; *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

4 For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving.

5 For it is sanctified by the word of God, and prayer.

ed two quotations together, and in these words referred to 1 Cor. x. 7. illustrated by Ps. cvi. 28, of which he had an imperfect remembrance: or that by φησι (with which the passage is introduced,) we are to understand "he *means*," and then it it will be only the *gloss* of Epiphanius. In this sense Mr. Mede took it, in his discourse on the *apostacy of the latter times*. Yet, as this seems a remarkable comment of so ancient a writer, I was willing to insert it in my *paraphrae*, though I could not mark it as any part of the text. The construction of the original in these two verses, προσεχοντες πνευμασι εν υποκρισει ψευδολογων, makes it necessary to vary from our translation in the manner I have here done. See *Crit. Not. on Scrip.* p. 9—103.

g *Abstinence from marriage and* various kinds of *meats.*] The original words, κωλυοντων γαμειν, απεχεσθαι βρωματων, contain, as Mr. *Blackwall* well observes, one of the boldest *ellipses* in the whole New Testament, where a word is to be understood, contrary to that which is before expressed. But he shews, that some of the most celebrated *classical* writers, and particularly Horace and Cicero, take the same liberty. *Black. Sacr. Class.* Vol. I. p. 72, 73.

SECT. V. to that dispensation, and therefore to expire when the authority of that law was to cease.

IMPROVEMENT.

Chap. iv. 1. WHAT *the Spirit of God expressly spake* has been so expressly accomplished, as plainly to prove the Divine original of this *oracle*, and of all that are connected with it. The *grand apostacy of the latter days*, is made manifest, *the seducing spirits* have effectually done their part, the world has given heed to them, and wandered after them; *so that doctrines of devils* have almost cast 2 out from his own church the doctrine of *Christ*. No testimony *of hypocritical liars* hath been wanting to confirm the fraud to the utmost of their power, and the whole conduct of it seems to declare to how dreadful a degree it is possible for *conscience to be* 3 *seared*. *Marriage has been forbidden*, while the pardon of *fornication*, *adultery*, *and incest*, have been rated at a certain price by that grand merchant of the *souls of men*, who hath ventured to call himself *the vicar of Christ upon earth*. By him men have been taught to place the greater part of religion in *abstaining from meats*, in attending unintelligible jargon, instead of the service of God's sanctuary, and in transforming the high solemnities of the simplest and most rational worship that ever was instituted, into a ceremonious farce. Adored be Divine Providence and grace, that any parts of the once dark domains of this *man of sin* have been awakened to assert the purity of the *Christian* faith and worship, and to seek to purge away the reproach and infamy which such adulterations had brought upon the *name!* Blessed be God that our attention is diverted from these trifles and monsters, these mysteries of folly, and mysteries of iniquity, *to the great mystery of godliness!* Let it be familiar to our thoughts.

Chap. iii. 16. *The manifestation of God in the flesh!* A sight which the *angels*, *beheld with wonder*, while the blessed *Spirit* sealed the authority of God's incarnate Son, and attested his gospel among the *Gentiles*, till the *world*, was brought to *believe* in him; so that he looked down from the throne of *glory*, to which he was *received*, and saw his own oracle fulfilled, *If I am lifted up, I will draw all men unto me*, (John xii. 32.) May this mysterious, yet resplendent truth be strenuously maintained, and practically preached, by all the ministers of the gospel; may they shew, in every iii. 15. iv—3. other respect, *that they know how to behave themselves* aright in *the house of the living God;* and may many by these means be brought to *believe and to know the truth* in its vital energy.

Then

Then will the common enjoyments of life have an additional relish *being received with thanksgiving, and sanctified by the word of God and prayer.* SECT. V.

SECT. VI.

Paul gives many good advices to Timothy, to attend to the great essentials of religion, patiently to endure all afflictions, to behave with the most exact decorum and exemplary care, and study to improve the gifts with which God had honoured him for the edification of the church and the salvation of souls. 1 Tim. IV. 6, *to the end.*

1 TIM. IV. 6.

IF thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, though shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith, and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.

7 But refuse profane and old wives fables, and exercise thyself *rather* unto godliness.

8 For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life

1 TIMOTHY IV. 6.

IF thou shalt be careful frequently to *suggest these* great and weighty *things* [a], of which I have now been writing *to the brethren* who are committed to thy charge, and to remind them of their importance with becoming zeal and affection, *thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ,* and shalt act as may be expected from one who has been *nourished up* from his very childhood *in the words of faith and of good doctrine, which thou hast accurately traced out,* and followed with suitable diligence. *But* these *profane and old* 7 *wives fables* [b], of which many of the Jewish allegorical and traditionary teachers are so fond, do thou *reject* as things altogether unworthy of thy regard, *and* rather take care strenuously to *exercise thyself* in those doctrines and practices which have the most immediate tendency *to* promote real *godliness.* *For* that *bodily exercise,* 8 about which many are so solicitous, and in the pursuit of which they go through so many fatigues, in preparing for, and attending the public games, *is profitable to* but very *little* [c], the best

SECT. VI. 1 Tim. IV. 6.

a *Suggest.*] Raphelius on the place justly observes, that this is the exact signification of the word ὑποτιθέμενος. For the import of παρηκολουθηκας, see on Luke i. 3.

b *Old wives fables.*] This undoubtedly signifies *Jewish traditions.* Compare chap. i. 4. 6; Tit. i. 14. If they were such as those with which the rabbinical writers, so far as I have had an opportunity of judging of them abound, nothing ever better deserved the name, they being not only the most *incredible,* but the most insipid and *senseless tales* any where to be met with.

c *Bodily exercise is profitable to little.*] Γυμνασια. It seems much more reasonable, with Dr. *Whitby* and Dr. *Edwards (on Script.* Vol II. p. 167, 168, to refer this to the celebrated *exercises at the Grecian games,* (of which Dr. *West* has given so entertaining and useful an account in the *Dissertation* prefixed to his *Pindar*) than to

SECT. VI.

best rewards of it being of a very transient and fading nature; *but* true, substantial, practical *godliness is profitable to all things, having the promise* both *of the present and future life* [d], naturally tending to promote our real happiness in this world, and being surely and alone effectual to secure the blessedness of the next. *This* [*is*] *a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance;* receive it therefore and retain it carefully, and inculcate it upon those who are committed to thy charge, or whom thou mayest be concerned in setting apart for the ministry. *For* the advancement of *this* godliness is the *end* of all the hardships *we* encounter; while we *both* pass through the most fatiguing *labour, and suffer* the sharpest *reproach* and the most violent outrage, *because we have hoped*, and continue to hope, *in the* protection and favour of the *living God, who is the Saviour* and Preserver *of all men* [e], by his gracious providence, and *especially of the faithful* souls who cordially believe and sincerely obey the gospel: for whom he reserves the most invaluble blessings of a future state, and whom he will guide safely to it, through all the dangers of this. *These*, my dear Timothy, are *things* of the greatest importance [f], and therefore *give* them solemnly *in charge, and teach* them to all, as thou hast oppportunity.

1 Tim. IV. 8.

life that now is and of that which is to come.

9 This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation.

10 For therefore we both labour, and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe.

11 These things command and teach.

And,

to those severities of the *Jewish Essenes* which some other *commentators* mention. These strenuous exercises might promote strength and courage, they would naturally raise high emulation, and the *victors* received great honours, and sometimes valuable immunities and privileges. Perhaps, indeed, some of these might hardly balance personal injuries they might meet with in them; and many had suffered much who received no reward at all. But the *apostle* stands not on this: he plainly intimates, that where men succeeded best, the greatest advantages they received by their victory all fell infinitely short of those which true religion secures.

d *Promise of the present and future life.*] *Godliness*, under the New Testament dispensation, has no particular promise of *health*, or *reputation*, or *wealth*, or any other individual blessing, though in its natural consequences it wears a most friendly aspect upon *all*, but it has the promise of *comfort and happiness* in general; and that declaration of Christ, that the good man shall *receive an hundred fold*, even *in the midst of persecution*, if that should be his lot, (Mark x. 30,) might alone be sufficient to vindicate the *apostle* in this assertion. I have often wondered, that so great a man, as the present Bishop of London, should suppose a reference here to the *covenant* with Noah, by which he supposes the original fertility of the earth was restored after the deluge; since there are so many other temporal promises made to the righteous; and the benefit of this is common both to good and bad men, admitting his *lordship's hypothesis* as to the sense of it. See Dr. *Sherl. on Proph.* p. 111.

e *Saviour of all men.*] This seems a title parallel to that in Job vii. 20; *Preserver of men*, but he is especially the *Saviour of believers*, as he extends to them the noblest and most important deliverance.

f *These* are *things* of the greatest importance.] The following expression, of *giving them in charge*, shews, that these words refer not merely to what was mentioned in the *former* clause, but to the whole *preceding* discourse.

SECT. VI.

1 Tim. IV. 12.

12 Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

And, that thou mayest inculcate them with the greater efficacy, *let* it be thy care to behave in such a manner, that *no man* may be able to *despise thy youth ; but*, on the contrary, let thy whole behaviour command a reverence to it, while others see that, young as thou art in years, thou art old in wisdom, piety, and universal goodness. *Be thou* therefore *an example to* all *the faithful in* prudent and useful *speech*, *in* a grave, steady, and consistent *conversation*, *in* unbounded *love*, and *in* a candid yet zealous *spirit* [g], *in* uniform and incorruptible *fidelity*, and *in* unspotted *purity*, by which all suspicion of evil shall be avoided, and even all occasion of apology superseded. And *till* 13
I come back to Ephesus, to take thee along with me, if Providence favour my purpose of returning, or if not, till I may have an interview with thee elsewhere, make the best improvement of thy time, as considering the greatness of thy work, and the various furniture which it requires. In this view, *attend to reading* the scriptures and other useful writings, and *to* the important care of *exhortation*, and *to* *teaching* both in public and private. *Neglect not*, by proper and strenuous exercise, to rouse and cultivate *that gift* of God's Holy Spirit *which is in thee, which was given thee* in a large and sensible effusion on that ever-memorable day when thou wert set apart to thy sacred office *by* the ministration of those who had the gift of *prophecy*, by which they were enabled and excited to foretel something extraordinary concerning thee. *With* such a token of his special presence did God honour *the imposition of the hands of the* whole *presbytery* [h], who concurred with me in recommending

13 Till I come give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

14 Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

14

g *In spirit.*] Some explain this of an industrious improvement of the *gifts of the Holy Spirit*, and have urged it as a proof, that Timothy was possessed of such extraordinary endowments of this kind, as raised him far above the rank of an ordinary minister. That he had *miraculous* gifts is certain, compare verse 14 ; but the proof of it from these words, which admit another sense so naturally and fairly, must be very precarious.

h *Gift—by the imposition of the hands of the presbytery.*] The presbyters seemed to have laid on their hands with Paul, when Timothy was solemnly set apart to the ministerial work ; and, as the Spirit was often given by the imposition of the *apostles* hands alone, compare 2 Tim. i. 6 ; Acts viii. 17, 18, we cannot suppose those of Paul would be less efficacious in this circumstance. See *Misc. Sacr.* Vol. II. *Ess.* ii. p. 70. It is strange, that a man of Mr. Slater's good sense should have thought of interpreting presbytery here of the *whole college of the apostles*. There is no reason at all to believe that there were

now

SECT. VI.

commending thee to his blessing by that solemn rite. *Meditate* therefore *on these things*, which I have now been writing thee by way of direction and charge; *be always employed in* attending to *these things*, *that thy improvement in all* that can conduce to the honourable and faithful discharge of thine office, *may be* made *manifest* to all around thee. In a word, remember that thou art surrounded with numberless temptations, and that the trust committed to thee is a matter of infinite importance. *Take heed* therefore *to thyself*, to thine own temper and conduct; *and* take heed *to* [*thy*] *doctrine*, both with respect to the matter and manner of thy teaching, and *continue in them*, making this the whole of thy business and care. The fatigue indeed may be great, and many of the restraints to which thou mayest be subjected for the present, disagreeable; but the happy consequence will counterbalance all; *for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and thy hearers*[1]. It will be the means, not only of delivering thine own soul in the great day of account, but of improving thy happiness to unknown degrees; and though it is not in thy power to command success, yet thou hast great encouragement to hope, that God will so bless thy labours, as to make thee instrumental in delivering many souls from death, and raising them to complete and everlasting felicity.

1 Tim. IV. 15.

15 Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them: that thy profiting may appear to all.

16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto thy doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 6 It is doubtless a very great advantage *to Christians*, and especially to the *ministers of Christ*, to have been *nourished* and educated

now together, or that any of them was with Paul, at *Timothy's ordination*; for there is no hint of its being performed at Jerusalem, where a *few*, though but a few, of them might perhaps reside at this time. See *Orig. Draught*, p. 184. As this text strongly implies, that Timothy was adorned with some supernatural gifts, so it also proves, that the degree in which such favours were continued, did very much depend on the *diligence and fidelity*, with which they were cultivated by the person who had received them.

i *Save thyself and thy hearers.*] I cannot forbear observing here, though it be not a *critical* remark, that the salvation of others may accidentally have some influence upon a man's *own* salvation; as the better those about him are, the more advantage he has for religious improvement, the fewer hindrances from duty, and temptations to sin. And the argument for imitation is much strengthened, when it comes from a person placed in an inferior station, from whom therefore less might be expected in that view than from ourselves. But certainly the thought chiefly referred to here, is the necessity of acting faithfully in the *ministry*, in order to being entitled to the Divine promise of salvation, in which persons who betray so important a trust, can have no part.

cated *in the words of faith and of good doctrine;* and they who are honoured with the great trust of training them up should be particularly careful on this head, remembering that no other branches of learning are of comparable importance to any *Christian*, and much less to those whose business it must be to maintain the faith of *Christ* in the world, and to instruct others in his doctrine, both publicly and privately. SECT. VI.

But to do this with success, and to command that *reverence*, which it is desirable for the public good they should command, whether they be younger or elder, it is necessary that they endeavour to be *examples to* other *believers* in their whole *conversation* and deportment, in *word* and *in spirit*, patterns of *charity, faith, and purity*. To qualify them more abundantly for such a work, whatever their *gifts* may be, whether of nature or of grace, it will be necessary to *stir them up* by frequent exercise, and to cultivate them by *reading* and *meditation*, as well as prayer; that their stock may be increasing, *that their profiting may appear to all*, and that they may lose no advantage they can secure, of rendering their exhortations and instructions worthy the regard of the wisest and best, as well as the least and weakest of those committed to their care. 12 14 13 15

But surely, whatever difficulties may lie in their way, and whatever fatigues, or *censures*, or *sufferings*, they may encounter, while thus employed, the prospect of *success* may sweeten all. If they may *save themselves and those that hear them*, if they may *give up an account with joy*, if they may see souls recovered from the tyranny of sin and the kingdom of *Satan* now, and at length, after having anticipated the pleasures of heaven upon earth, raised to the full enjoyment of those pleasures above, they will *bless* the remembrance of their labours. Yea, the very consciousness of spending life in such pursuits must, to a generous and pious mind, afford unspeakably *more* delight than the acquisition and enjoyment of any thing which the children of this world pursue, and perhaps some of them with equal fatigue. 10 16

Let *Christians* in other stations also be quickened to exert themselves in the same blessed cause, remembering, that while other things, for which men labour *as in the fire*, can *profit but little, godliness is profitable to all*. It hath so far the *promise of this life*, that the godly man shall not want any thing that his Father and his God knows to be truly *good* for him, and he will probably be abundantly *happier* in this world, amidst all the calamities to which he may be exposed, than in like circumstances he could possibly have been, without such a principle of *piety* in his heart: and it has absolutely *the promise of the life which is to come*, and that such a life, so glorious and so lasting, that the very mention 8

of

SECT. vi. of it may well swallow up the thoughts of *this* life and its interests, any farther than as they are connected with that. Let us 9 then receive the word with all *readiness*, and pursue these glorious objects, *trusting in the living God*, who, while he scatters 10 the bounties of his common Providence on *all*, is, in a peculiar and most important sense, *the Saviour*, the Guardian, the Father *of those who believe*.

SECT. VII.

Directions for Timothy's conduct towards persons in different circumstances, and particularly elders and widows: which leads the Apostle to give some advices concerning those matrons who were intrusted by the church with some peculiar office, and supported out of the public stock in the discharge of it. 1 Tim. V. 1—16.

SECT. vii.

1 Tim. V. 1.

1 TIMOTHY V. 1.

1 Tim. V. 1. REBUKE not an elder, but entreat *him* as a father, *and* the younger men as brethren,

THY office, O Timothy, will often oblige thee to censure the conduct of others, and sometimes of those who are more advanced in age than thyself. But remember to do it with a becoming modesty and tenderness. *Rebuke not an aged man*[a] *severely, but* rather *exhort* [*him*] *as a father*, to perform whatever duty he neglects, or to avoid those temptations which may be dangerous to him: [*and*] as to *the younger*, though thou mayest use more freedom with them, yet remember still to treat them with kindness and affection, *as brethren*, and not with a lordly and supercilious contempt.

2 Address thyself to *the aged women, as mothers*, [*and*] to *the younger, as sisters, with all chastity*, and the strictest decorum in thy converse with them; remembering how many eyes are upon thee, and how fatal any thing, which might in that respect bring the least blemish upon thy character, would be to the honour and success of thy ministry, and to the credit of the gospel 3 and its professors. *Honour*, and endeavour honourably to support, those *widows who are truly widows*[b], and whose destitute circumstances

2 The elder women as mothers, the younger as sisters, with all purity.

3 Honour widows that are widows indeed.

a *An aged man.*] The opposition between elder and younger, plainly shews, that πρεσβυτερος here signifies an *aged person*, which may farther be argued from the opposition between elder and younger in the next *verse*.

b *Truly such.*] Here is, as Calvin justly observes, an allusion to the Greek word χηρα, which signifies a person in *distressed* and *indigent* circumstances.

c *Day*

SECT. vii.

1 Tim. V. 4.

stances recommend them as the certain objects of charity. *But if any widow hath children, or grand children*, who are capable of supporting her, *let them learn first to exercise* grateful *piety at home, and to repay* the benefits they have received from *their parents*, or remoter progenitors, in their necessities, before they talk of extending their generosity to others; *for this is* good and decent, fair and *beautiful* in the eyes of men, *and* it is likewise *acceptable before God*, who requires us, out of regard to his honour and favour, to attend carefully to the duties of those relations in which we stand to each other.

4 But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God.

5 Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day.

Now that you may understand the character, 5 to which I advise you to confine your charitable exhibitions, I must add, that *she who is truly a widow, and* thus *left alone*, and destitute of the assistance of human friends, is one that *hopeth in* the good Providence of *God*, reposing herself with humble confidence on his faithful care, *and continues* constantly *day and night*[c] *in supplications and prayers*, makes devotion her business, in the proper return of its daily seasons, and endeavours to be as much at leisure for it as her circumstances in life will permit. *But* 6 *she that liveth luxuriously*, as some Christian widows, to the great shame and scandal of their profession do, *is* indeed *dead while she liveth*[d], as to the noblest ends and purposes of life. *And* as this is a very important article, and *these* 7 *things*, in some degree, affect Christians of all circumstances and relations in life, who are too ready to lose themselves in the pursuit of sensual pleasure, I desire thou wouldst *give* them *in charge* to all thy hearers, *that* so *they may* in this respect *be blameless*[e]; and that by maintaining

6 But she that liveth in pleasure, is dead while she liveth.

7 And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless.

c *Day and night.*] That is, *continually*, morning and evening, and on every proper occasion, by night or by day, 1 Thess. ii. 9; iii. 10; 2 Thess. iii. 8; 2 Tim. i. 3.

d *Dead while she liveth.*] Some *philosophers*, even among the barbarous nations, are noted for having spoken of those as *dead*, who deserted what their *sects* esteemed the doctrines of truth, and abandoned themselves to sensual passions. The word σπαλωσα, which we may render *living in pleasure*, properly signifies *faring deliciously*; and Dr. Whitby observes, it especially refers to drinking strong and costly liquors.

e *That they may be blameless.*] Some would refer this to the *widows*; but the gender of the word ανεπιλημπτοι rather favours our referring it, either to the *deacons*, or to *Timothy's hearers* in general; since it is certain, that *widows* were not the only persons, who, in so luxurious a city as Ephesus, were in danger of falling into such sensualities as he had been warning them against.

f *Those*

SECT. VII.

1 Tim. V. 7.

taining a due government of themselves, and strenuously attending to the duties of life, they may answer the obligations under which they lie.

8 *But* especially insist upon it, that a due care be taken of the poor, by those of their relations who are capable of supporting them; for *if any do not provide for his own, and especially for those of his own house*[f], *he hath*, whatever he may pretend, in effect and practically *denied the faith, and*, on the whole, *is worse than an infidel*[g]; bringing a greater dishonour upon the gospel than one who openly professes to reject it, while he is thus deficient in those duties which common humanity teaches even many of the heathens to practise themselves, and to inculcate upon others. 9 *Let not a widow be taken upon the list*[h] of those to be maintained by the church, and to minister in the office of deaconnesses in it, who is *under sixty years old*, and then, only such a person *who hath been the wife of one man*[i], and avoided all scandalous commerce with others 10 And, as some peculiar

8 But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

9 Let not a widow be taken into the number, under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man,

10 Well reported of for

f *Those of his own house.*] Των οικειων seems to signify *domestics*, or those who dwelt with the indolent person here spoken of; and it would certainly be an aggravation of his neglect, if these relations, whom he was unwilling according to his ability to maintain, were in his *family*, and consequently under his eye; so that there does not seem to be reason, with Mr. *Hallet (Notes on Script.* Vol. I. p. 31), to conclude, it signifies those of the *household of faith*, as the *apostle* speaks elsewhere (Gal. vi. 10), that is, *believing relatives*.

g *Worse than an infidel.*] Dr. Whitby proves, by very apposite citations, that the heathens were sensible of the reasonableness and necessity of taking care of near relations, and especially of parents, when they fell into poverty.

h *Taken upon the list, &c.*] Καταλεγεσθω has precisely this signification. Surely none can imagine, that the *apostle* meant to confine the charity of the church to widows of *such an age*, and who had all these characters; we must therefore conclude, that he speaks of those who bore the office of *deaconnesses*, who were probably intrusted with the care of entertaining Christian strangers, whether ministers or others, and perhaps of educating some poor children, who might be maintained by the *alms of the church*. And it might, on many accounts, and for very obvious reasons, be proper, that *this office* should be committed only to persons of an advanced age, and such as had laid aside all thoughts of marrying again. It is evident, that they who had practised hospitality themselves in their more prosperous days, would be peculiarly fit for one part of this office, and peculiarly worthy of the countenance which this office gave, and of the trust which it implied.

i *The wife of one man.*] It is very certain that *second marriages* in general are not condemned by Christianity, and it would be a great objection against it if they were. The apostle expressly advises the *younger widows to marry again*, ver. 14; and it would seem very hard to exclude them afterwards from this office, how fit soever they might be for it on other accounts, merely because they had done it. I therefore am inclinable to think the meaning of the expression may be, one who has chastly confined herself to *one husband*, while in the married relation; for it is certain, that it never was usual among the Jews or the Greeks, to admit women to have more than one husband at once. It may deserve consideration, whether this may not reflect some light on the correspondent phrase, when applied to a bishop, chap. iii. 2.

k *Grown*

for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

liar trust is reposed in such, let care be taken that she be [*one*] *who hath a reputation for good works* in general; and she will especially be worthy of such an encouragement and honour, *if she have educated* her own *children* with care, or any other children who have been committed to her; *if* in her more prosperous days *she have* expressed an hospitable temper, and *lodged strangers*, who have been at a loss for necessary accommodations on their journies; especially *if she have washed the saints' feet*, and in other respects relieved in a proper manner Christians in such circumstances; *if she have*, in other instances, according to her abilities, *assisted the afflicted*; and, in short, *if she have followed every good work*, and endeavoured to adorn her profession by a benevolent and useful life. *But refuse* to admit into such an office *the younger widows; for when they grow wanton*[k], as (though such a disposition be directed *against* the laws of *Christ*) many in such a circumstance of life do, *they will marry*, and perhaps to husbands who are strangers to Christianity. Thereby *exposing themselves to* just blame of men and *condemnation* from God, *because they have disannulled their first faith*, and violated their engagement to the church, when it assigned them such an office, to which it would be very inconvenient to admit persons that have any views of entering again into the conjugal state: not to say that some men have been enticed, by very improper alliances, to throw off even the general profession of Christianity. *And* indeed, with relation to several of such (as I have observed in societies less careful in this respect than were to be wished,) these women *also*, while they pretend to continue in their office, *being idle* and slothful in the province *they* have undertaken, instead of staying at home, and attending the proper duty of their charge, *learn* [*a habit of*] gadding abroad, and *going from house to house; and* [*they are*] *not only*

SECT. vii.

1 Tim. v. 10.

11 But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry;

12 Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith.

13 And withal they learn *to be* idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tatlers also, and busy bodies, speaking

11

12

13

k *Grown wanton, &c.*] Καταστρηνιασωσι is a strong expression, which cannot be exactly rendered into English. When these widows grew negligent of their proper duty, sensual affections might prevail upon them; and their credit among Christians being hurt by such an unbecoming conduct, it is very probable they might often be forced to take up with *heathen husbands*, and so might at length be led to apostatize from Christianity.

l *Triflers.*]

SECT. VII.

only idle, but triflers also[1] *and busy-bodies:* there is a levity and impertinence in their behaviour, which is the natural result of neglecting to keep themselves well employed; and they are often *speaking things* that are very *unbecoming*, which do loudly proclaim the irregularity of their disposition, and shew how much their minds are vitiated and disordered.

ing things which they ought not.

1 Tim. v. 13.

14 *I would therefore have the younger* [*widows*], instead of thinking of a trust and situation, for which they are generally so unfit, to *marry* again, if they are so inclined, as it is generally best that they should; *and* employ themselves in such cares as suit the mistress of a family, that they may *breed children*, [*and*] *govern their domestic affairs so as to give no occasion to the adversary*, who is glad to find any excuse for it, *to speak reproachfully* of religion, on account of the unsuitable behaviour of its professors. And I give the caution with the greater solicitude, because it is too evident, that as *for some*, from whom the churches expected better things, they *have already turned aside after Satan*, so as to follow his leading and impulse, in direct opposition to the law of Christ, and much to the detriment of his interest.

14 I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.

15 For some are already turned aside after Satan.

16 *But if any believer of either sex have* near relations, who are *widows*, *let them*, as I advised before, *take care of them* at home, *that the church may not be burdened* with more charitable cases than it can properly support, *but may take care of* [*those who are*], as I have said, *truly widows*, and must otherwise be left altogether desolate.

16 If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1, 4, 16. MINISTERS are instructed by this apostolical advice, in that difficult duty, of managing *reproof* aright. *Churches* may learn how their poor are to be treated, and *children* may be reminded of that *grateful* tribute which they owe especially to their *aged and necessitous parents*. No recompense can be *fully* adequate, but surely to a generous temper nothing can be more delightful, than to sooth the declining years of those by whom our infant-days

[1] *Triflers.*] The word φλυαροι seems to be derived from φλυειν, which I think properly signifies the noise which water makes when it is ready to boil over. See *Raph. in loc.* And therefore it very well expresses the inward *fermentation* (if I may so speak) in the minds of these trifling people, which they vented by unprofitable discourses.

days were sustained, our feeble childhood supported, and our giddy youth moderated and directed. SECT. vii.

Let St. *Paul's* sentiments of a *luxurious* life be particularly attended to in this *age* of ours, in which so many are entirely *devoted* to these pleasures. They call it *living*, but the wiser *apostle* pronounces it a kind of *moral death*. And many of the *heathens* themselves have been instructed by nature to speak in a language like his. Nay some of them *acted* on this principle in a manner which might shame most that call themselves *Christians*. Let us learn to form our taste to *nobler* pleasures than those on which thoughtless multitudes are so intent. Let us cultivate those that are suited to our *rational and immortal spirits*, and that will not only follow us into the invisible world, but will there be exalted and improved. Ver. 6

But let us be particularly careful, that, while religion raises us above a sensual life, we do not make use of it as a pretence to excuse ourselves from attending to *social* duty. To neglect a due care of those whom Providence has committed to us, would, in the *apostles'* language, be a *denial of the faith*, and would even argue us *worse than infidels*, who, deficient as they were in the knowledge of God, or in such regards to him as were even proportionable to what they knew, discoursed largely and excellently on the obligations of *justice and benevolence* to our fellow creatures and were themselves examples of what they taught in relation to them. 8

Among other virtues here spoken of with due honour, a proper care *in the education of children* is none of the least. Let Christians of both sexes be diligent in it, and let *women*, to whom the chief care of *children* is consigned in those tender years, when the deepest and surest impressions are often made, be sensible, how great advantage the public may receive by their wise and pious conduct towards them. While many are *triflers and busy bodies, running from house to house, and speaking things which they ought not, let women professing godliness* remember they are to adorn it by the exercise of *domestic* virtues, so as to cut off occasion of *speaking reproachfully*, even from the ingenious malice of *adversaries:* occasion too often given by those who, while they follow the gay desires of their hearts, and the fashions of this vain world, seem to have forgotten what the *apostle* intended by the awful and lively phrase of being *turned aside after Satan;* and make themselves his more secure and certain prey, by every step they take in these flattering paths through which he would lead them to final destruction. 10 13 19 15

SECT.

SECT. VIII.

The Apostle adds directions concerning the regard to be shewn by the people to their faithful ministers; concerning the method of proceeding against those who were accused of any fault; and the most prudent and regular manner of treating candidates for the ministry. The section concludes with some other necessary advices and particulars for the instruction of Christian slaves. 1 Tim. V. 17—*to the end.* Chap. VI. 1, 2.—

1 TIMOTHY V. 17.

SECT. VIII.

1 Tim. V. 17.

I HAVE already been giving you some directions with relation to those who are elders in age, and now let me add a word or two concerning those who are distinguished by the office they bear in the Christian church, and have that title of respect and reverence given them on that account. And here, *let the elders which preside well*[a], *be esteemed worthy of double honour*[b], and, as circumstances may require and admit, let them be respectfully maintained by the society; *especially those who,* to all their other kind cares of a more private nature, add an exemplary attendance to that of public instruction, and *labour* with diligence and zeal *in* administring *the word, and* stating and vindicating the *doctrine* of the gospel in your religious assemblies[c]. *For* you well remember, I doubt

1 TIM. V. 17.

LET the elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

18 For the scripture saith,

a *The elders who preside well.*] Mr. *Reeves (Apol.* Vol. I. p. 115, *note* p,) must surely be driven to very great extremities, when, to ward off some consequences which were to him disagreeable, he concludes that these elders were bishops, in the English sense of the word, or persons of an order *superior* to common ministers: which interpretation would suppose, that some such officers in the church might *preside* well, though they did not *labour* in the *word,* while able to do it, which the following words evidently suppose the *elders* here spoken of to be; for else their being disabled by age, or any other infirmities, would be a strong reason for their being honourably maintained, on account of the services of their better years. Compare note on 1 Thess. v. 12.

b *Double honour.*] It is a scrupulous nicety of interpretation, to explain this as a decision, that they were to have twice as much as the *deaconnesses.* Different circumstances might require different exhibitions to persons in the same office. It seems only to express a plentiful maintenance (according to what they needed, and the society could afford,) given in a liberal and respectful manner.

c *Especially they who labour.*] This seems to intimate that there were some who, though they *presided* in the church, were *not* employed in *preaching. Limborch* indeed is of opinion, that κοπιωντες signifies those who did even *fatigue themselves with their extraordinary labours,* which some might not do, who yet in the general *presided* well, supposing preaching to be a part of their work. *Limb. Theol.* lib. vii. cap. iv. § 10. But it seems to me much more natural to follow the former interpretation. Compare 1 Cor. xvi. 16.

d *The*

saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn; and, the labourer *is* worthy of his reward.

doubt not, that *the scripture has said*, again and again, *Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn*, but shalt allow him, while labouring upon it, to eat of it as his hunger requires, (Deut. xxv. 24; 1 Cor. ix. 9; and note;) *and* the Old Testament, as well as the words of our Lord and the reason of mankind, teaches us, that *the workman* [*is*] *worthy of his hire*[d]; on which account the law requires that, instead of being entirely withheld from him, it should not be delayed for a day. (Deut. xxiv. 14; Lev. xix. 13.) Persons therefore, who labour in so honourable and important a work, are by no means to be neglected, nor suffered to want necessary support and encouragement. Great care should also be taken that their reputation, on which their usefulness will so much depend, may not be lightly impeached. Accordingly, *do not receive an accusation against an elder, unless on the testimony of two or three* credible *witnesses*; for the single report of any one person is not material enough to set against the word of an elder, maintaining his own innocence.

SECT. viii.

1 Tim. v. 18.

19 Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.

19

20 Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.

You will, I doubt not, use your utmost endeavours to preserve the purity of the church; yet, as offences will certainly come, let me advise you to keep up a due solemnity in church-censures; and as for *those that sin*[e] in any scandalous and remarkable manner, *rebuke* them *before all, that even the rest* of the congregation *may fear*, and stand upon their guard against those temptations which have brought upon others such public admonition and reproof. *I* know how contrary these faithful proceedings may sometimes be to flesh and blood, and therefore solemnly *charge*[*thee*] *before* the blessed *God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels*[f] (who

20

21 I charge *thee* before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe

21

d *The workman, &c.* As the very words of this passage only occur, Luke x. 7; it is the opinion of the ingenious Mr. Seed, that St. Paul here quotes these words of the *evangelist* as of equal authority with those of Moses. Deut. xxv. 4. *Seed's Ser.* Vol. II. p. 292.

e *Those that sin.*] I see no reason for understanding this of *offending elders*; though, were it to be so taken, it would by a strong consequence be applicable to others. A humour of seeking a stricter connection than is any way necessary, has led many *commentators* into very limited, and sometimes into whimsical, interpretations.

f *The elect angels.*] Mr. Jos. Mede interprets this of the *seven archangels* chosen by God to the greatest nearness to him, and highest honours in the court of heaven. But all his arguments, to prove that there is *such* a number of celestial spirits, in such *posts of distinction*, appeared to me so precarious, that I rather chose to explain the words in a more general manner, on principles which I think much more certain.

SECT. viii.

(who having kept their stations, when so many of their fellows were seduced by Satan, are now confirmed in a state of immutable felicity, and shall attend our common Lord to the awful judgment of the great day), *that thou keep these things without* any *prejudice* against any part of them; *doing nothing by partiality*, in favour of one person more than another, according to the inducement of private friendship or affection.

1 Tim. v. 21.

observe these things, without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.

22 And as it is a matter of so great importance to the Christian church, what persons are admitted to minister in it, I must also charge thee, that thou *lay hands suddenly* and rashly *on no man*[g], to set him apart for that sacred trust, before his character and qualifications have been fully examined and thoroughly approved. *Neither make thyself partaker in the sins of others*, as thou wilt certainly do, if thou art the means of bringing those that thou mightest have discovered to be unworthy men into the ministry; who may have much greater opportunities of doing mischief, in consequence of their bearing such an office, and may give great scandal, and lead many others astray. Therefore *keep thyself pure*

22 Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.

23 guarding against the first occasion of them. A recollection of the difficulty of thy work, and what I know of the tenderness of thy constitution, and thy great abstinence, engage me to caution thee, that thou *do not* confine thyself *any*

23 Drink no longer water, but use a little wine

g *Lay hands suddenly* and rashly.] That this is the signification of ταχεως, Raphelius has sufficiently shewn. Though some have referred this to the laying on of hands in the *absolution* of notorious offenders, it seems safer and more natural to explain it of *ordination to the ministry*; in reference to which this rite is often alluded to in these epistles. It has been said by one of the most rational and candid patrons of *Diocesan Episcopacy*, "What need was there that, after the settlement of a Christian church at Ephesus, Timothy should be sent to *ordain elders*, if a right of ordination lay in presbyters, or in a *church*, nominating to the pastoral office? Especially, how should he, on this supposition, be directed to perform it *himself*, and not merely to advise and assist others in the performance." *Bishop of Winchester*, (Dr. *Hoadly*) *of Epis.* p. 392. But I must beg leave to answer, that this does not appear to be the *chief* reason of Timothy's being sent to Ephesus, or rather being left there, when Paul went into Macedonia, (chap. i. 3.) Various circumstances of this church might require, that a person of Timothy's extraordinary gifts and character, should be left to superintend their affairs: and it might reasonably be taken for granted, that, as he was there by the apostle's special direction, so much regard would be paid to him, that he would be desired to preside in their sacred solemnities, in the same manner as Paul had done when among them. But that no *elder* could at any time be ordained, without the presence and concurrence of such an extraordinary person, and that such an extraordinary power and influence should afterwards be transferred to others, not in like manner qualified for the management of it, are things neither easy to be proved, nor rashly to be taken for granted, on a question of so great moment.

wine for thy stomach's sake, and thine often infirmities.

any longer to *drink water* alone, *but use a little wine* mingled with it, *for the sake of thy stomach*, which needs to be strengthened by that more generous liquor in a moderate quantity; *and* out of regard to *thy frequent infirmities*, which otherwise may grow upon thee, so as to render thee incapable of that public service for which thou art so well qualified [h].

SECT. viii.

1 Tim. V. 23.

24 Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some *men* they follow after.

In judging of characters, and passing sentence, according to the advice given above, you will find it necessary in different cases to use different precautions. *The sins of some men are manifest, leading on to* pass *judgment* on them without any difficulty; *whereas some follow after*, and are so artfully disguised, that it will require great diligence and strict examination to detect them. *So also the good works of some are manifest* to all, and spread a kind of glory around those that perform them, which renders them lovely and venerable in all eyes: *and those which are otherwise*, though for a while concealed under the thickest veils that humility can spread over them, *cannot* long *be* entirely *hid*. They will appear on accurate observation; and as they will at the last day be laid open to their public honour, they will in the mean time recommend such silent and reserved Christians to the esteem and respect of those who are intimately conversant with them; and may even prove the means of advancing them to some important trusts, which they are not the less fit for because they have so low an opinion of their own merit.

24

25 Likewise also the good works *of some* are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid.

25

VI. 1. Let as many servants as are under the yoke, count their own masters worthy of

I shall only here add a word or two concerning servants, whom, inferior as their station in life is, I would not have you overlook; since their souls are equally valuable before God with those of their superiors, and much of the credit of Christianity is concerned in their conduct and behaviour. *Let* therefore *as many servants as are*

VI. 1.

h *Use a little wine*, &c.] One cannot forbear reflecting here, how very *temperate* Timothy must have been, to need an advice of this kind; which amounts to no more than mingling a little wine with his water. And what is said of his *many infirmities* compared with the *apostle's* exhortation to him, to be *instant in preaching* the word, may certainly teach us, that every weakness of constitution is not to be acquiesced in as an excuse for not going on with the ministry; though, to be sure, great allowances are to be made for bodily infirmities, and life itself may often depend upon seasonable interruptions of public labour. Sir Norton Knatchbull, observing that the connection is so broken between the 22 and 24 verses, by the insertion of this advice in this place, conjectures, that Paul might write it in the *margin* by way of *postscript*, and that it was introduced into the text by the mistake of some early transcriber.

SECT. VIII.

1 Tim. VI. 1.

are under the yoke of bondage, *account their own masters worthy of all* that civil *honour* and respect which suits the station in which they respectively are; not taking occasion from their own religious knowledge and privileges to despise and rebel against them; *that the name and doctrine of God*, which they profess, *may not be* 2 *blasphemed* by their insolence and pride. *And as for those* servants *who* are so happy as to *have believing masters, let them not* presume upon that account to *despise* [*them*], *because they are brethren*, and with respect to sacred privileges, equal in Christ their common Lord; *but let them rather serve* [*them*] with so much the greater care, tenderness, and respect, *because they are faithful and beloved*, [*and*] *partakers with them of the* great and glorious *benefit*[1] which the gospel brings to all its faithful professors, of whatsoever rank or profession in life. And let the thought of the degree in which they share the favour of God, the tender bond in which as fellow-Christians they are joined, and the hope of partaking with them in all the final blessings of an happy immortality, while it engages their servants to behave towards them in a becoming manner, teach the masters duly to condescend to them, and treat them, not only with justice, but with kindness.

of all honour; that the name of God and *his* doctrine be not blasphemed.

2 And they that have believing masters, let them not despise *them*, because they are brethren: but rather do *them* service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit.

IMPROVEMENT.

THE regards here required to the *elders who preside well*, and Ver. who *labour in the word and doctrine*, are in themselves so reason- 17 able, that where the other duties of *Christianity* are attended to, and

1 *Partakers with them of the benefit.*] Some would render οι της ευεργεσιας αντιλαμβανομενοι,, &c. *because they who partake of the benefit*, that is, the benefit of their service, *are faithful and beloved.* But this seems to take it for granted, that what the apostle exhorted to was already actually done; that is, that such faithful services *were* rendered. Others, as Mr. *Cradock* has observed (*Apost. Hist.* p. 221), would translate it, *who will be careful to recompense the well-doing of their servants*; but I think ευεργεσια signifies a *benefit freely conferred*, and therefore is hardly fit to express even the cheerful and exact obedience of *slaves.* If this clause be referred to the *servants*, and the whole be rendered, *but rather let them who partake of the benefit*, that is, who have a share in the same blessed hope with their masters, *do service to them, because they are faithful and beloved*, the sense will be so far the same, that ευεργεσια will signify that great and glorious *benefit*, which, by virtue of our Christian profession, superiors and inferiors equally share; and strongly suggests, what a band of union the participation of it should in all reason prove. But this supposes a transposition which seemed unnecessary; so that this is on the whole one of the many texts, where, having examined a *variety of versions*, we have been obliged to acquiesce in our own, which is in the main a very good one; and generally gives the *true* sense, though the elegance and spirit of it may often be improved.

and the inestimable blessings of it duly apprehended and esteemed, there will be no need of insisting largely upon them. To be cautious how we *lightly believe* any report to the injury of such, is what we owe to ourselves as well as them, since our own improvement, by their ministration, will be greatly obstructed by any *prejudices* taken against their persons. SECT. VIII. 19

Let the *ministers of the gospel* remember how much it is their duty to appear strenuously in defence of their master's precepts, and to *reprove* bold and insolent offenders, in whatsoever rank they may stand. And, lest riches, and power, and greatness of station, should obstruct their faithful execution of this office, let them think of the *solemn charge* they have received *before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels*, and of the appearance which they and their people must make before the awful tribunal of *Christ, when he shall come in his own glory, and that of his Father*, and attended by all *his holy angels*. The frequent consideration of that important day would have an uniform influence on the whole of their conduct; it would particularly make them careful, that they do not contract *pollutions*, and make themselves *partakers in other men's sins*, by *laying hands suddenly* on any; but use a proper care in examining, that in the great business of *ordination* they may act on the conviction of their consciences in the sight of God, and maintain an unbiassed regard to the honour of the great Redeemer and the salvation of souls. Yet let them still be severer towards themselves than others, and maintain that *strict temperance* and self-government in every respect which may become the dignity of their characters, and command the reverence of all about them. 20 21 22 23

Let us *all endeavour* to be shining examples of good works, and while so many *declare* their sins *openly*, and *send them* as it were *before them to judgment*, let us never be ashamed of religion. Yet where a modest *reserve* may be conveniently maintained, let us study it, and always avoid an unnecessary ostentation, as remembering the time will come, when those *good works*, which have been most solicitously *concealed* from the eyes of men, will be publicly honoured and rewarded by God. In expectation of that day, let us all attend to our proper offices, whether in superior or inferior stations of life, studying so to behave, as *that the name and doctrine of God may never be blasphemed* upon our account, and always feeling the force of that endearing engagement to all social duties, which arises from our *sharing* with all true *Christians* in the favour of God, and in the blessings and hopes of his *gospel*. 24 25 Chap. VI. 1, 2.

SECT. IX.

The Apostle presses Timothy to urge on his hearers, the great things which relate to practical godliness, and what will be attended with the happiest consequences; and cautions against covetousness, as the root of all evil. 1 Tim. VI.—2—12.

SECT. IX.

1 Tim. VI. 2.

1 TIMOTHY VI. 2.

THESE things, which I have been mentioning, take care, O Timothy, to *teach and exhort* thine hearers always to maintain a due regard to them. And *if any one teach otherwise,* if he attempt to broach principles contrary to these great maxims, *and attend not*[a] *to* such sound and *wholesome words,* [*even*] *to those of our Lord Jesus Christ*[b], as these may with strict propriety be called, *and* which express *the doctrine* [*that is*] *agreeable* and subservient *to* the great cause of practical *godliness,* which it is the declared design of the gospel to promote in the world; Whatever fair shews of simplicity and humility he may affect, *he is* certainly *proud,* and, whatever conceit he may have of his superior knowledge, he is *one who knows nothing* to any good purpose; *but,* like a man *raving* and delirious in a fever, he runs on, declaiming *on* idle *questions*[c], *and* useless *debates about words*; *from whence* no good can be expected to *arise,* but, on the contrary, a great variety of mischief, *envying* of those more regarded than themselves, *contention* with others who will not submissively yield to what such self-sufficient teachers dictate, *abusive language,* which their

1 TIM. VI. 2.

THESE things teach and exhort.

3 If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, *even* the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;

4 He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof

a *Attend not.*] I think it is with great reason, that the learned Dr. *Bentley* supposes, that the original reading was not προσερχεῖται, which is seldom used in this sense, but προσιχεῖται, or rather προσιχει, which has been thus used in this *epistle.* Chap. i. 4. See *Phil. Lips. against Coll.* p. 72, 73.

b *Words of our Lord Jesus Christ.*] I neither suppose, with Mr. Pyle, that this refers to Mat. xxi. 27, and the many parallel places, nor with others, to any sayings of our Lord's which *tradition* had as yet continued, but which are now lost. It seems much more natural to conclude, it goes on this important principle, that, what the apostle wrote, as by Divine direction, was in effect the *words* and commandments of Christ. Compare 1 Cor. xiv. 37.

c *Raving on questions,* &c.] It is so well known that νοσων signifies a person in a *distempered* state, that it hardly required the pains which Dr. Abraham Taylor has taken to prove it, by a large collection of authorities. Bishop *Wilkins* would render it, he is *sick of questions,* or of the *wrangling disease,* with which, it is much to be lamented, that the Christian *clergy,* as well as *laity,* have so generally been infected, in almost all ages and nations. *Wilk. Serm.* p. 73. The word here seems to express the *effect* of a disease upon the mind, in which view *raving* appeared a more proper word than *doting.*

d *With*

of cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,

5 Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.

6 But godliness with contentment is great gain.

7 For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out.

8 And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.

9 But they that will be rich, fall into temptation, and a snare, and *into* many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown

their intemperate zeal deals round to all who offend them, and *evil suspicions* and obnoxious representations of the worthiest and most amiable characters; Angry *debates of men whose minds are corrupted and averse from the truth,* for which they pretend so eagerly to plead; *while they* seem to *suppose* that which promises the largest quantity of *gain to be* most worthy of their pursuit; and would, if possible, varnish it over with the venerable name of *godliness. Turn away* therefore *from such,* and have no intimacy with them. *Whereas,* on the contrary, if any man will but have the integrity and resolution to follow true religion, wherever it leads him, he will certainly find that *godliness,* which is so naturally accompanied *with* inward *contentment*[d] and peace of mind, in every circumstance of life which providence may appoint, *is* indeed *great gain;* and does much more to promote real happiness than any accession of wealth could possibly do. And it is the truest wisdom to accustom our minds to such reflections as these; *for we brought nothing into the world* along with us, but were thrown naked upon the indulgent provision which our gracious Creator has been pleased to make for us; [*and it is*] *evident that,* whatever treasures the most insatiable avarice could amass, *we cannot carry any thing out* of it, but must in a little time return to the dust, stripped of all. *Having therefore,* while we continue in this transitory and uncertain life, *food and raiment,* and having the other necessaries of it, *let us be content with these,* and not seek, with restless earnestness and solicitude, the great things of it, which are often of so short a continuance, and of so precarious, as well as so unsatisfying a nature. With these sentiments we may enjoy what happiness is to be expected in a world like this; *but they who are determined that* at all adventures *they will be rich, fall headlong into* many a dangerous *temptation, and* many *a* fatal *snare, and* [*into*] *many foolish and mischievous desires; which* not only sink men beneath the dignity of their nature, but

SECT. ix.

1 Tim. VI. 5.

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d *With contentment.*] Diodati thinks αὐτάρκεια here signifies a *competency;* but it gives a much nobler sense, to suppose the apostle to intimate, that *contentment,* will attend *godliness,* as its inseparable companion; and consequently that the godly man will be happy, whatever his circumstances in life may be, and even much more so, than any accumulation of worldly wealth can make him.

e *Pierced*

SECT. IX.

but prove the occasion of much further mischief; insomuch that they frequently *plunge men into* an irrecoverable abyss of *ruin and destruction*, in which they lose their worldly possessions, and, what is infinitely more valuable, their souls too.

drown men in destruction and perdition.

1 Tim. VI. 9.

10 *For the* excessive *love of money is the root of all* moral *evil, which some having greedily desired, have* so debauched their minds with corrupt prejudices, that they have *wandered from the faith*, so as to abandon the very profession of the gospel; *and* while they were dreaming only of the pleasurable consequences that would attend their more exalted circumstances in human life, have *pierced themselves through with many sorrows*, and felt long and incurable pains, by the numerous wounds they have given to their own consciences, as it were on every side[e].

10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

11 *But thou, O man of God*, whom he hath honoured as he did the prophets of old, making thee his messenger to thy fellow-creatures, *shun these things;* these insatiable desires of worldly possessions and enjoyments, which will render thee most unfit for so sacred an office; *and pursue*, as the richest prize and the noblest gain, the practice of universal *righteousness* towards men, and *piety* towards God, *fidelity* in every branch of trust committed to thee, *love* to all mankind, *patience* under every affliction, and *meekness* under every provocation. *Maintain*, in the most strenuous manner, and with all the force thy soul can exert, *the good*, noble, and glorious, *combat of faith*[f]; *lay hold on* the prize of *eternal life;* and let none, how violently soever they may assault thee, wrest it out of thine hands: even

11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called,

e *Pierced themselves through.*] I have endeavoured in the *paraphrase* (though I could not do it in the *version*) to give something of the emphasis which Leigh and other critics have observed in the word περιεπειραν; which, we are told, properly signifies, they have *stabbed themselves*, as it were, *from head to feet*, so as to be all covered with wounds. And this indeed happily expresses the innumerable outrages done to conscience by those madmen who have taken up this fatal resolution, that they will at all adventures be *rich*.

f *Maintain the good combat*, &c.] These and the following words are plainly *agonistical*, and refer to the eagerness with which they who contended in the *Grecian games* struggled for, and laid hold upon, the *crown;* and the degree to which the presence of many spectators, or (as the apostle elsewhere speaks) the *cloud of witnesses*, animated them in their contests for it. It might perhaps more literally be rendered, *Exercise the good exercise;* but that is a *Grecism*, which the English language will not conveniently allow; nor does the word *exercise* by any means express the force of αγωνα, which always supposes an opponent to be resisted, as *combat* also does. The learned Dr. *Lardner* very justly observes, we are often liable to be diverted from the right meaning by a translation, which yet is not the fault of it, but owing to some defect in modern languages, which want words exactly correspondent to the ancient original. *Lardn. Serm.* p. 270.

ed, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

even that life, *to* the hope of *which thou hast been* solemnly *called, and* in pursuance of it *hast confessed a good*, fair, and worthy *confession before many witnesses*, who were present on that solemn day when thou wert given up to the full exercise of the ministry. SECT. IX. 1 Tim. VI. 12.

IMPROVEMENT.

If we do indeed believe the *love of money* to be the *root of all* Ver.
evil, let us set ourselves seriously to extirpate it out of our bosoms, 10
and to imbibe this *true philosophy* of the apostle, to seek our *gain*
in that *godliness* on which *contentment* waits, and which makes its 6
disciples happy on the easiest terms, by *moderating* their *desires*.
Food and *raiment* of one kind or another few want. But where 8
there is real necessity, and has been a care to behave well, if a
man's own stock be deficient, he is generally supplied from the
charity of others; and true piety and greatness of mind can enjoy the gift of providence on *these* terms without repining, being truly sensible, how little, even the best, amidst so many imperfections and miscarriages, can deserve to receive any thing from God by the instrumentality of any creature.

To this day do we see such facts as taught the *apostle* these useful remarks, independent on those miraculous influences by which he was guided, in things spiritual and evangelical. As we see 7
the new-born race of human creatures rising *naked* into life, we
see death stripping the rich, the noble, and the powerful, and returning them *naked to the dust*. In the mean time, while we may observe many in lower circumstances, cheerful and thankful, we see those who are *determined on being rich, falling into temp-* 9
tations and snares. We see them *piercing themselves through with*
many sorrows, and plunging themselves into irrecoverable *ruin and* 10
destruction, while they pursue, to the utmost verge of the fatal precipice, those shadowy phantoms, which owe all their semblance of reality to the magic of those passions which riches or the desire of them have excited.

Happy would it be for the *church of Christ*, if these important doctrines of practical religion were more inculcated, and less of the zeal of its teachers spent in discussing *vain questions and* in- 4
tricate *strifes about words* which have been productive of so much *envy* and *contention*, *obloquy* and *suspicion*. Let the *men of God*, therefore, inculcate *righteousness and faith, piety and charity, pa-* 11
tience and meekness, and let them endeavour to render their lessons successful, by a care themselves to *pursue* these graces; to *exercise themselves*

SECT. IX.

themselves more strenuously in that noble and generous *conflict to which they are called*, so as to *lay hold on* the crown of *eternal life*, and to retain it against the most powerful antagonist. These are
Ver. 12 the *wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ*, even these *doctrines*
3 *according to godliness;* and the minister, who will be wise enough to preach and act upon these principles, will raise the most lasting character, and secure the most valuable reward.

SECT. X.

The Apostle concludes with a solemn charge to fidelity in the ministry, and particularly urges Timothy to inculcate on those that were rich, such exhortations and cautions as their peculiar circumstances required. 1 Tim. VI. 13, *to the end.*

1 TIMOTHY VI. 13.

SECT. X.

AND now to conclude, *I* solemnly *charge thee*, as *in the presence of God, who*, by his continual energy, animates and *quickens all*
1 Tim. VI. 13. *things*[a], in the whole compass of the creation, and at his sovereign pleasure revives the dead; *and* in the presence of *Christ Jesus, who*, when he was examined *before Pontius Pilate, witnessed*, at the apparent hazard of his life, *a good confession*[b], in declaring himself to be indeed a king, though he knew how liable that declaration was to a most unjust and pernicious interpretation; In this august presence do I charge
14 thee, O Timothy, *to keep* [*this*] *commandment*, which I have now given thee in all its branches, and to deliver it down to those who may succeed thee, *unspotted and blameless*, that it may shine with uncorrupted lustre through all future ages, even *till the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ*,
15 *Which in his own* appointed *times, he shall manifest*, in the most awful and conspicuous manner,

1 TIM. VI. 13.

I GIVE thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and *before* Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession;

14 That thou keep *this* commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ;

15 Which in his times

a *Quickens all things.*] This seems a very suitable, though oblique intimation, that, should Timothy, after the example of his great Lord, *sacrifice his life* to the honour of his profession, God, *who raised up Christ from the dead*, was equally able to raise him. And this is most fully expressed and urged, 2 Tim. ii. 8, 10, 11.

b *Witnessed a good confession.*] This refers to John xviii. 37. Christ's confession before the *Jewish high priest*, when interrogated upon oath (Mat. xxvi. 63, 64; Mark xiv. 61, 62), was rather more *express*, but this before Pilate was more *dangerous*; as his owning himself a *king* was the only pretension that was likely to expose him to the resentment of the *Roman governor*, who had the supreme power of life and death. John xix. 10. It is perhaps called a *good confession*, not only as in itself noble and generous, but as all our hopes of salvation and happiness are built upon the *truth* of it.

c *Rich*

times he shall shew, *who is* the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;

ner, [*who is*] *the blessed and* indeed the *only potentate*, before whom no other name or power is worthy of being mentioned. He may with the strictest propriety be spoken of by that title, by which other princes have vainly and blasphemously affected to be called, *the King of kings and Lord of lords*, who hath the fates and lives of all the monarchs on earth entirely in his hands and can dispose of them all according to his sovereign pleasure: SECT. X. 1 Tim. VI. 15.

16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see; to whom *be* honour and power everlasting. Amen.

Even he, *who alone hath* 16 *immortality* in himself; so that all kinds and degrees of life in others are derived from him, and continually dependent upon him, according to the orders issued from that throne on which he sits supreme, *inhabiting inaccessible light, whom no man hath* ever *seen* in the full display of his glory, *nor* indeed *can see*, without being immediately overwhelmed with the first glance of it; *to whom* [*be*] *honour and everlasting dominion* ascribed by us, and by all his creatures through eternal ages. *Amen.*

17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in

One farther instruction I have to give thee, 17 which I shall here add by way of postscript. There are indeed few of *those who are rich in this* present *world* [c], that embrace the gospel, or will have any regard for the instructions of its ministers. But as it is probable that some such may be found, in so opulent a city as that of Ephesus, in which thou now residest, and as my own labours there have succeeded with some few in this rank of men, remember that their character and behaviour is of peculiar moment. Do not therefore flatter them, but faithfully *charge* them, to behave in a manner suitable to their distinguished station, and to guard against the snares to which it exposes them; particularly urge it upon them, *that they be not high-minded*, so as to despise their inferiors, who often are in the sight of God much wiser and better than themselves; and, *that they do not trust in uncertain riches*, of which a thousand accidents may immediately deprive them, *but in the living God*, whose favour will be a sure and eternal portion to all that are possessed of it; even in

[c] *Rich in this world.*] This clause seems to be added to extenuate the value of riches, which extend only to *this* transitory and precarious *world*, and can neither attend us into the *other*, nor at all influence our happiness there.

[d] *Rich*

SECT. X.

in that gracious Being, *who imparts to us all things richly for* our *enjoyment*, and who has so liberally distinguished them by the communications of his bounty. Charge it upon them, *that*, in proportion to the abundance God has given them, *they do good, that they be rich in good works*, that they be *ready to distribute* what Providence hath lodged in their hands. And *willing to communicate*[d], what they have so freely received; thereby *treasuring up to themselves a good foundation against the future; that they may*, through the riches of Divine grace, *lay hold on eternal life*, when they relinquish all their possessions here, and find every temporal enjoyment deserting them for ever.

1 Tim. VI. 18.

in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate:

19 Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

To conclude all, *O* my beloved *Timothy*, as thou valuest thine own soul, and desirest to give up thine account with joy, *keep that* gospel *which is lodged with thee*, as a sacred trust, and never suffer it to be wrested out of thy hands. Let thy very soul dwell upon it, *avoiding profane* [*and*] *empty babblings, and the opposition of that which is falsely called knowledge*[e], but is indeed ignorance, pride, and folly: *Which some having professed* to pursue, *have* fatally *wandered from the* Christian *faith*, some entirely forsaking it, and others corrupting it with such adulterations, that it is hardly to be known for that religion which came immediately out of the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ. And that thou mayest ever oppose such false teachers with integrity, courage, and success, *may* the *grace* of Christ [*be*] ever *with thee* in all things, to guide thy judgment and thy conduct. *Amen.*

20 O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane *and* vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called.

21 Which some professing, have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen.

IMPROVE-

d *Rich in good works, ready to distribute willing to communicate.*] If these phrases have any thing of a different signification, perhaps it may be, as Archbishop Sharpe explains it: Let them endeavour in the general to do good, not only now and then, in some scanty proportion, but *frequently, constantly, and abundantly*, not only with their time, labour, and interest, but by distributing of their substance too; and this as freely, as if it were a common stock to which all had a right. Archbishop *Sharpe's Ser.* Vol. I. p. 136. Yet these expressions clearly shew, that there was not a *community* of goods among Christians in general for in that case there could have been no room for the exhortation and the distinction on which it is founded.

e *Falsely called knowledge.*] Though it is not certain that the name of *gnostics*, or the *knowing men*, was so early used to denominate a distinct sect, yet it is highly probable that they who opposed the apostle made extraordinary pretences to *knowledge*; and this text seems sufficient to prove it.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. X.

O THAT we might often be setting ourselves as *in the presence of God*, the great and blessed God, whose almighty power *quickeneth all things*, and is the life of universal nature, and of *the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead!* Let the thoughts of so august a presence awaken our souls to diligence in the discharge of our duty, and let it animate us with courage to *witness a good confession*, to whatever inconvenience and danger it may expose us. Never let us forget that *appearance which he shall manifest*, to whom all these sublime titles belong, even that *blessed and only Potentate*, before whom all the lustre of all the princes upon earth vanishes in a moment, like that of the smallest stars before the rising sun: *the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who alone hath immortality, and dwelleth in unapproachable light.* How astonishing his goodness in vailing his glory, so that we may approach him, in bowing down his ear to receive our requests, yea in coming to *dwell with that man who is humble and of a contrite spirit, and who trembleth at his word!* (Isa. lxvi 2.) *To him be honour and power everlasting.* And let his infinite *majesty* be deeply and affectionately remembered, amidst all the condescensions of his *love.*

Ver. 13 15 16

Let the *rich in this world*, since the riches which here distinguish them cannot attend them into another, be engaged to receive with all reverence the charge of our holy apostle. Too many of them *walk in pride;* but they see, by the sepulchres of many, once as opulent and as haughty as themselves, and by a thousand other marks of the Divine power and human weakness, how soon *God is able to abase them.* (Dan. iv. 37.) Forsaking, therefore, what they think their *strong tower, and the high wall*, which, instead of sheltering, may soon crush them into ruins, let them transfer their *confidence to the living God.* Alarmed in a state which renders their salvation almost as difficult as *it is for a camel to go through a needle's eye*, let them learn from hence how to improve *what is another's*, in such a manner, that they may in due time *receive what shall be* for ever *their own;* (Luke xvi. 12.) Let them learn to be *rich in good works*, and by a *readiness to distribute* and *communicate*, let them *lay up a celestial treasure;* and drop with joy every gilded trifle which would hinder their *laying hold on eternal life.* Let the *ministers* of that great Lord, who is so much higher than all the kings of the earth, at least shew their fidelity to him, in giving such plain and faithful *charges*, even to those, who, by their outward circumstances,

17 18 19

SECT. X. are placed in the highest ranks of life; being infinitely more solicitous about securing their *Master's* approbation than gaining the favour of *mortal worms*, who lift up their heads on high because they have a few grains of shining dust at their disposal,

20, 21 And may the *men of God* manifest the like wise and pious magnanimity, in avoiding a vain glitter of a *falsely pretended science*: when it would either lead them to *err from the faith*, or to neglect those important articles of it, which lie most *plain and obvious* in the word of God: and for that very reason are too often disregarded by those, whom an empty ostentation of subtilty and learning has taught, to treat the *Divine wisdom* of God as *foolishness*.

THE END OF THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR ON THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

END OF THE NINTH VOLUME.

E BAINES, PRINTER, LEEDS.